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Scoring Dance: The Ontological Implications of 'Choreographic Objects'

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Scoring Dance: The Ontological Implications of 'Choreographic Objects'

By

Hetty Blades

September 2015



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Abstract

This PhD thesis examines the way in which spectatorial relationship with certain dance works is reconfigured through emerging practices for documenting, analysing and ‘scoring’ dance, paying particular attention to the role of digital technology. I examine three central case studies, developed between 2009 and 2013, which are outcomes of major research projects, these are; *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced* (Forsythe and OSU 2009), *Using the Sky* (Hay and Motion Bank 2013) and *A Choreographer’s Score: Fase, Rosas danst Rosas, Elena’s Aria, Bartók* (De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012). These ‘scores’ fall under the title of ‘choreographic objects’, a term which, following Leach, deLahunta and Whatley (2008) I use to refer to collaboratively produced, artist-led objects that utilise technology in various ways, to explore and disseminate choreographic processes.

Focussing on western contemporary theatre dance practices and drawing on discourses from Dance Studies, Performance Studies, Philosophical Aesthetics and Digital Theory, I consider how ‘choreographic objects’ pose philosophical questions regarding the ways in which audiences access, interpret, appreciate and value works, examining the evolving role of the score in issues of identity and ontology. I also consider the score-like nature of these objects, drawing comparisons with codified movement notations, such as Labanotation, developed by Hungarian dance theorist Rudolf von Laban (1879 – 1958). The case studies pose many queries, however the central focus of this research is on three key questions; what are ‘choreographic

objects'? How do they reconfigure spectatorial engagement with specific dance works? And, how does this reconfiguration encourage a rethinking of their ontological statuses?

The case studies demonstrate an increased interest in the articulation, examination and dissemination of choreographic process. In recent years many artists, based primarily in Europe and the USA, such as Siobhan Davies (1950 -), Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker (1960 -), William Forsythe (1949 -), Emio Greco (1965 -), Steve Paxton (1939 -); have teamed up with researchers and technologists to develop digital, or partially digital objects which examine and articulate their choreographic processes. deLahunta (2013b) suggests that together these artists give rise to a 'community of practice'. This is a notion formulated by Etienne Wenger (1998) to describe groups of people who are engaged in collective learning, including, for example, "a band of artists seeking new forms of expression" (Wenger 2006: 1). The shared interest in cultivating new ways to express choreographic process generates a form of community between these artists. The objects generated through these investigations are labelled 'scores', 'archives' and 'installations', however, each one problematises their categorical label, thus generating the rubric of 'choreographic objects'; an emerging class of object which both crosses and defies existing modes of description.

The circulation of 'choreographic objects' is relatively new therefore a detailed examination of their ontology, function and impact provides a significant theoretical and practical contribution to current dance discourses and practice. This research

contextualises these objects, situating them socio-culturally and examining the motivations and repercussions. The ontological probing considers the nature of the objects and their impact on the way we perceive and conceptualise the notion of the dance 'work'.

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Chapter One: Introduction

We live in a changing world of dance, and the level of discourse regarding dance and choreographic practices has been raised considerably compared to the mid or late twentieth century (Birringer 2013: 8).

As performance theorist Johannes Birringer points out, discourse in UK and European Dance Studies has undergone a significant shift in recent years. Dance artists, audiences and scholars are increasingly turning their attention to the articulation and dissemination of choreographic process. Important questions are posed by this shift. For example, as a form conventionally accessed solely via performance, what are the repercussions for the ontological status of dance? Furthermore, how are our appreciative, interpretive and analytic roles challenged and re-framed?

This research considers the practices, preservation, analysis and dissemination of western contemporary dance practices. I examine three case studies that belong to an emerging class of entities referred to by scholars Scott deLahunta, James Leach and Sarah Whatley (2008), amongst others as 'choreographic objects'. Perhaps confusingly, this term is used to refer to two different, albeit related types of things. Frankfurt based, American choreographer William Forsythe adopts the term to refer to installations and other artefacts that are created in accordance with choreographic principles (2008). However, following Leach, deLahunta and Whatley, I use it to denote an object, authored by a choreographer in collaboration with others, which utilises digital technology to articulate and disseminate choreographic thought. These entities take the form of archives, such as *Siobhan Davies RePlay* (2009), the online

archive of British choreographer Siobhan Davies' work, made in collaboration with Whatley and researchers from Coventry University, installations, such as *Double Skin/Double Mind* (2006), made by Dutch dance company Emio Greco| PC in collaboration with notators, researchers and technologists, and DVDs, such as American choreographer Steve Paxton's *Material for the Spine* (2008). However, I focus specifically on three dance scores. My first case study is *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced (Synchronous Objects)* (2009)¹ an online score of Forsythe's work *One Flat Thing, reproduced* (2000). The score was created by Forsythe in collaboration with Norah Zuniga Shaw and Maria Palazzi from Ohio State University (OSU) and a large inter-disciplinary team. *Synchronous Objects* became the prototype for Motion Bank, a large research project commissioned by Forsythe and led by Scott deLahunta between 2010 – 2014, which resulted in online scores considering the work and works of contemporary artists Deborah Hay, Jonathan Burrows and his collaborator, Matteo Fargion, and Bebe Miller and Thomas Hauert. Hay's score, *Using the Sky* (2013)² is my second case study. The third case study, *A Choreographer's Score: Fase, Rosas danst Rosas, Elena's Aria, Bartók (A Choreographer's Score)* (2012) comprises a book and DVD. It considers the early works of Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker and is the first of three scores collaboratively authored with performance theorist Bojana Cvejić.

These objects both generate and re-frame many important philosophical questions such as: what are 'choreographic objects'? How do they reconfigure spectatorial

¹ See <http://synchronousobjects.osu.edu/>

² See <http://scores.motionbank.org/dh/#/set/sets>

engagement with specific dance works? And, how does this reconfiguration encourage a rethinking of their ontological statuses? This thesis addresses these questions by interrogating the nature of these objects and testing their relationship to established theoretical perspectives. I examine how the case studies raise broader ontological questions about the nature of dance works and encourage a re-thinking of established modes of conceptualising works as abstract objects, physically accessed through the act of performance. I highlight how such perspectives are problematised by the documentation of dance and in particular how the foregrounding of choreographic process suggests a conflation of the work of dance making and the work of dance art.

Digital technology is central to 'choreographic objects', which is of particular interest throughout the research as I consider how it facilitates a reconfiguration of our engagement with some dance works, and therefore a rethinking of their ontology. Of particular relevance is the way that technology makes it possible to demonstrate certain features of the work, that are not visible in performance. The notion of 'visibility' is a complex one, as what people may or may not see is dependent upon a wide range of factors. Although I do not directly address the complexities of visibility, the question of which skills, forms of literacy and knowledge is required to access the work through the 'choreographic object' and to navigate the object itself, recurs throughout the research. When referring to the experience of using the object, I alternate between the terms 'user' and 'viewer', in order to reflect whether I am writing about the act of using the object, or viewing the dance through it. However,

these demarcations are not always clear in practice, reflecting the entwined relationship between ‘choreographic objects’ and the works they inscribe.

Brief History of Dance Scoring

This study relates to a lineage of scholarship that considers the role and function of dance scores, and their relationship to dance works and performances. Writing in 1972, dance notation expert Ann Hutchinson (Later Ann Hutchinson Guest), proposes that, “[f]or at least five centuries attempts have been made to devise a system of movement notation” (1972: 1). She suggests that these attempts can be traced back to ancient Egyptian and Roman methods for documenting gestures. One of the first attempts to formulate a system for notating dance was developed by Thoinot Arbeau in his book *Orchesographie* in 1588. This publication includes drawings of the positions and steps used in the well-known dances of the period, which were accompanied by written descriptions (Hutchinson 1972: 2). However, according to Hutchinson the drawings are inadequate in their aim to represent movement, suggesting that, “[w]ithout Arbeau’s lengthy explanations of terms, the dances are unintelligible” (1972: 2).

The French king Louis XIV is widely considered to have had a significant influence in the development of ballet.³ Under his direction Jean Baptiste Lully established the first academy for professional dancers. As dancing developed as a professional practice at this time so too did notation and in 1700 Raoul Feuillet published

³ See Levinson (1983: 49), Pouillaude (n.d: 7) and Reff (1983: 221) amongst others.

Chorégraphie, ou l'art de décrire la Danse, which is described by Hutchinson as, “the first fully fledged system of notation” (1972: 2). She describes Feuillet’s notations as, “extremely well worked out” (1972: 2), but explains how this system focused almost solely on the footwork and stepping patterns, and therefore did not provide a clear indication of the rhythm of the movement.

The development of other systems followed, including Arthur Saint Léon’s *Sténochoréographie* in 1852, Albert Zorn’s *Grammatik de Tanzkunst* in 1887, *Alphabet de Movements du Corps Humain* by Vladimir Stepanov in 1892 and Margaret Morris’s *Notation of Movement*, published in 1928 (Hutchinson 1972: 2-3). Morris’s book was published in the same year as Rudolf von Laban’s *Schriftanz*, or ‘Written Dance’ (Hutchinson 1972: 2-3), which provides the basis for Labanotation (also referred to as Kinetography Laban). Labanotation uses symbols representing body parts arranged on a vertical staff. Hutchinson suggests that Laban’s system offered innovations, such as the vertical staff to represent the body and the use of elongated movement symbols to represent time. She proposes that this analysis method, “which is based on spatial, anatomical, and dynamic principles, is flexible and can be applied to all forms of movement” (1972: 3).

Although it was not developed solely for dance, Labanotation is used in dance practice, however it is not the only system used. Eshkol-Wachmann notation, an approach developed by Noa Eshkol and Abraham Wachmann, first published in Israel in 1958 is still used and taught, as is Benesh notation, first published in *Choreology* by Joan and Rudolf Benesh in 1956. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but serves to

demonstrate the way in which there have been multiple modes of movement notation developed over an extensive time frame. However, none of these systems are widely used in current western Contemporary Dance, although some systems are used in Classical Ballet.

The fact that so many attempts have been made to formulate a sharable system of notation highlights the complexities of representing the movement of the body. Whilst music notation has become commonplace in the western music-art tradition, in dance no single method of inscription has ever been universally adopted. There are many potential reasons for this, including the varied demands of different styles and genres. However, perhaps the most commonly cited reason is that dance is too complex to notate, due its existence in both time and space and dependence upon the body (Hutchinson 1972: 1). This view is advocated by Burrows, who outlines the difference between music and dance in this regard asking, “[h]ow do you “see” four dimensions at once?” (in Burrows and Van Imschoot 2005).

This question is arguably unique to dance. In *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (1976), philosopher Nelson Goodman provides a detailed account of the role and function of artistic scores. Alongside music he discusses painting, literature, sculpture and dance. Although addressed only briefly, dance captures Goodman’s attention, he explains that, “[t]he possibility of a notation for dance was one of the initial questions that led to our study of notational systems” (Goodman 1976: 212).

Goodman outlines the complexity of the issue, referring to the view that dance is too complicated to be captured by notation due to its status as a,

visual and mobile art involving the infinitely subtle and varied expression and three-dimensional motions of one or more highly complex organisms (Goodman 1976: 212).

However, Goodman actually disagrees with this perspective, claiming that scores do not need to capture all of the subtle details of a performance. He suggests that such an approach would be both “hopeless” and “pointless” (Goodman 1976: 212), due to the way in which scores function to specify the essential properties of a work. By this he means that scores capture the features that must be present in any correct and authentic performance of a work. Under Goodman’s view a score does not aim to capture every single detail, rather only those that are *essential* to the identity of the work.

Goodman’s notion of the score is very specific. He uses the term to refer solely to work-determining documents written in codified notation. He claims that, “the language in which a score is written must be notational” (1976: 178), meaning that it must meet his five semantic and syntactic requirements. According to Goodman notation differs from a “drawing, study or sketch on the one hand and from a verbal description, scenario or script on the other” (1976: 127). He proposes that in order to qualify as notation a system must use inscribed characters to denote components, with each inscription standing for only one character, hence avoiding the ambiguity associated with words or drawings, which have the potential for multiple interpretations.

Goodman suggests that in the case of the performing arts, scores have an important theoretical role, as they can be used to identify a work from performance to performance (1976: 128). Indeed he goes as far as to suggest that scores are essential to identifying genuine instances of works of the performing arts, claiming that performances must fully comply with their scores. This is an important feature of Goodman's view, in the case of music for example, even one wrong note results in the performance failing to be an instance of the work (Goodman 1976: 128). Goodman's position is arguably purely theoretical, as opposed to practical (Goehr 1992: 25). In particular, he does not suggest that audience members are required to undergo this process of identification in order to ascertain which work they are watching. Rather, he attributes the score a "fundamental *theoretical* role" (1976: 138 [my emphasis]), his point being that genuine instances of the work would theoretically comply exactly with the corresponding score and that any mistakes in performance would mean that it fails to constitute an instance of the work.

Goodman's view is discussed by the contemporary aesthetician Graham McFee, who also sees notation as a way to deal with the identity problems posed by dance works, but distances himself from aspects of Goodman's view (2011; 42- 55). In comparison to Goodman, McFee has a relatively broad conception of what may constitute a notational form. He acknowledges the wide range of movement notation systems, and whilst in 1992 McFee maintains that notation is distinct from writing (1992: 97-

98), his later work he suggests that rules, shared though language might also count as scores (2011: 55). He proposes that,

any recipe which, if followed with understanding produces a performance of the dancework in question counts as a score for that dancework (McFee 2011: 55).

Indeed, some recent dance practices have shifted in focus, away from a desire to formulate a universal and codified mode of dance notation. This is perhaps due to the ease of video recording for documentation, but can also be attributed to an acceptance of the nature of the form and an increase in the view that it is not susceptible to certain modes of inscription. For example, writing in 2005, performance theorist Miriam Van Imschoot refers to historical notation systems, suggesting that,

[i]n retrospect, however, one can now see that none of the systems could establish a lasting or pervasive foothold. When looking for an overview on the notational endeavors of choreographers and dance makers in the last centuries, what one sees is more a sort of “babelisation” of idiosyncratic instructions than a commonly and widely applied overarching language (Van Imschoot 2010).

Significantly, however, dance *is* frequently inscribed, but the planning, sketching, and writing of dance usually takes idiosyncratic form and includes the use of language. Choreographers often use notebooks inside and outside of the studio to keep track of their movement ideas. Although not composed in a universal code, such objects are often referred to as ‘scores’, meaning that as a choreographical term, ‘score’ has become extremely broad and arguably ubiquitous. A situation that leads Birringer to

suggest, that "there is always a score, in all artistic practices and in all contexts where art is exhibited/performed" (Birringer 2013: 10). Here it seems Birringer is referring to a score as a set of structures that determines how an artwork is performed or displayed. This conception stands in stark contrast to a traditional view of scoring, such as Goodman's strict requirements. The vast expansion of the concept of the score results in the term referring to objects that do not inherit the ontological clarity of traditional notation systems. Developed with varied intentions, the status and function of these scores is harder to define and their relationship to the work difficult to establish.

Recordings and 'Choreographic Objects'

Developments in technology over the past two decades mean that it is now possible for choreographers to record their work in a variety of ways, which limits the need for codified preservation strategies. However the recording of dance is not a new phenomenon, dance has been captured by video recording for as long as the technology has been available. Film is used for documentation, as a rehearsal tool and for the development of new art works. Dance also had a long relationship with cinema. In her book, *Dance Film: Choreography and the Moving Image* (2011), dance

scholar Erin Brannigan refers to dance film practitioner and scholar, Patrick Bensard's observations that,

as modern dance began, the cinematograph was invented and that as the first swirls of Loie Fuller's veils occurred, the Lumiere brothers cranked their camera for the very first time (Bensard in Brannigan 2011: 19).

Dance on screen takes multiple forms; it features in films across many genres, as well as in specially made dance films. Of specific interest here, however is the use of film for documentation. Recordings of dance have a central role in dance practice and analysis.

For example, contemporary American choreographer Meg Stuart writes,

[w]e spend a lot of time looking at the videotapes of the rehearsals. I often have the dancers learn their improvised material directly from video, including every little mistake (Stuart 2012: 193).

This articulation highlights the practical role of recordings, which is further discussed by Cvejić, who describes the video camera as "an obligatory rehearsal tool" (2012b: 192).

As well as serving a function within the studio, recordings often provide audiences with the only possible way of seeing a dance, due to geographical, economic or time constraints. Paraphrasing American dance critic Lewis Segal, McFee suggests that recordings might be the only option available to most viewers (2011: 113).

He quotes Segal as suggesting that,

[I]n Los Angeles, our pleasure in dance and even in dance literacy are compromised by everything we can't see in the flesh (Segal in McFee 2011: 113).

However, the observation of dance through recording raises philosophical problems.

In *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (1993) performance theorist Peggy Phelan famously ⁴ claimed that,

[p]erformance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations *of* representations; once it does so, it becomes something other than performance (Phelan 1993: 146).

This view poses problems primarily because performance does get documented therefore some consideration of this 'other' is necessary. In agreement with Phelan, McFee argues that watching a recording of a performance does not count as viewing the work, due to the ontological centrality of live performance (2011: 33). These perspectives and the way they rub up against common practice are important to this research, which considers the relationship between the work, performance, score and recording, attempting to uncover and map this complex web of relations.

⁴ Phelan's claim sparked a wide debate in Performance Studies and has been challenged by Rebecca Schneider (2001,2011) and Philip Auslander (1999) among others.

The 'choreographic objects' at the centre of this enquiry do not smoothly align with conventional modes of conceptualising dance scores. This is primarily because they are focused towards the analysis and dissemination of choreographic processes and knowledge, alongside performance outputs. One of Forsythe's key interests, articulated on the homepage of *Synchronous Objects* is the question, "what else might physical thinking look like?" (2009). The notion of 'physical' or 'choreographic' thought implies an alternative mode of knowledge. The primarily physical nature of dance does not only makes it difficult to capture, it also generates forms of knowledge that do not easily align with western dualist traditions. Dance theorist Gabriele Klein suggests that,

[j]ust as theories on modern art generally see the physical medium of dance as a 'the other' of modernity, dance knowledge is also considered 'another type of knowledge' — a form of knowledge whose physical nature prohibits discourse about it (Klein 2007: 28).

The type of knowing that arises from dance making and performing is sometimes referred to as 'choreographic knowledge', and this notion plays a central role in the construction of 'choreographic objects'.

Referring to a number of projects emerging in the last decade, Zuniga Shaw suggests,

[w]ith very different outcomes, each of these projects is concerned with the idiosyncratic nature of choreographic knowledge and with discovering new possibilities for tracing and transmitting ideas contained within the specific dance practices of each artist (2014: 207).

This poses another set of questions at the heart of this enquiry, such as; what is 'choreographic knowledge'? How can it be shared, accessed and understood? And what impact does the acquisition of 'choreographic knowledge' have on the appreciative faculties of the viewer?

Perhaps one of the most philosophically interesting questions concerning 'choreographic objects' is how they can be categorised and understood. Despite adopting existing terms such as 'archive', 'installation' and 'score', each example I refer to problematises these categorical distinctions in various ways, as is demonstrated by the coining of the term 'choreographic object'. They perhaps propose a new form of object, not fully explainable through existing terminology. Forsythe describes his 'choreographic objects' as, "a model of potential transition from one state to another in any space imaginable" (2008). He theorises this transition in relation to musical scores, suggesting that they represent the potential for action, and that in activation a transition occurs from the visual to the aural.

He goes on to suggest,

[a] choreographic object, or score, is by nature open to a full palette of phenomenological instigations because it acknowledges the body as wholly designed to persistently read every signal from its environment (Forsythe 2008).

Although discussing a different class of entities to those considered here, this articulation from Forsythe demonstrates how the two conceptions of the term are related. Although *Synchronous Objects, Using the Sky* and *A Choreographer's Score* offer less potential for action than other dance scores, the notion of transition

connects them to Forsythe's articulations. Through these objects the work transitions from an abstract/material conception to an open web of metaphysical, cognitive and kinaesthetic instances. Furthermore, the space the work occupies is multiplied, as it is re-contextualised in new forms of object.

I suggest that the novelty of 'choreographic objects' arises primarily from the way in which they conflate process and product. Choreography is typically, or at least traditionally, performance oriented, focussed towards constructing a performance event, usually with enough constraining features to, theoretically at least, allow for the work to be repeated through multiple performances. The ontological complexity of dance is demonstrated by the fact that the product of choreography is two-fold, as it generates both a work and infinite potential performances. Documentation strategies such as notation, photographs and recording offer artefacts through which the products of work and performance can arguably be experienced. This is where the key distinction lies between these strategies and 'choreographic objects.' As the aptly named research project developed by Dutch company Emio Greco I PC demonstrates, 'choreographic objects' are more concerned with 'Capturing Intention' (2004), than replicating or capturing the work in performance, and are therefore different to previous notation and documentation strategies. Furthermore they generate a new form of commodity; one that is distinct from the performance event, but that nevertheless has a relationship to the abstract work. Significantly, these objects reveal the labour of choreography, the detailed examination of both process and practice draw attention to the depth of work involved in making and performing dance works.

The motivation to articulate and share 'choreographic knowledge' is arguably indicative of the contexts in which these projects were produced. For example, the increased presence of practice-as-research in UK Universities gives rise to a context in which artists undertaking such research are required to find ways to articulate the research-ful and knowledge producing nature of their work, to fit within institutional frameworks for assessment. This situation is reflective of wider sociological concerns in contemporary culture. Klein outlines the way in which knowledge is associated with value and power. She suggests, "[i]n the gloablised world of the 21st century, knowledge is considered the key to prosperity, influence and power" (2007:2). Leach (2013) further suggests that 'choreographic objects' are the result of the relationship between knowledge and value in western culture. Articulating and documenting the process of dance making foregrounds the activity's knowledge producing nature.

Historically, the notation, documentation and circulation of dances had significant socio-political implications. For example, in *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance* (2011), dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster suggests that the transportation of dance through the development of Feuillet notation had colonial implications, as it allowed for the introduction of the "finest accomplishments of a colonial power" (2011: 32). In a related discussion in, 'Media and the No-Place of

Dance' (2008), dance scholar Harmony Bench considers the position of the subject in Feuillet writing. She suggests that,

[a]t a representational level, Feuillet notation describes a subject that establishes himself as a center from which to govern a periphery" (Bench 2008: 39).

The positioning of the subject informs Bench's argument for further links between notation systems and colonial paradigms. These observations from Foster and Bench raise an important point regarding the implicit ideologies embedded within all forms of documentation. Through considering the questions, what are 'choreographic objects'? How do they reconfigure spectatorial engagement with specific dance works? And, how does this reconfiguration encourage a rethinking of their ontological statuses? This study seeks to excavate the onto-political, considering the relationship between socio-political structures, ideological frameworks and philosophical enquiry. Addressing ontological questions, such as what is a dance work? And what is a dance score?, alongside questions about appreciation and interpretation, allows for the consideration of the relationship between the socio-political context of the objects and their metaphysical repercussions.

Outline of Thesis

Chapter Two provides a literature review, examining a range of sources central to the study. I outline arguments from philosophers and dance scholars such as Goodman

(1976) McFee (1992, 2011), Frédéric Pouillaude (n.d),⁵ Anna Pakes (2013) and Sarah Rubidge (2000a,b) regarding the ontology of dance works. I go on to consider discourses in Philosophical Aesthetics, Dance Studies and Performance Studies that consider the philosophical issues raised through the documentation of dance. Drawing on theorists such as Phelan (1993) and McFee (1992, 2011), this section provides an overview of some key questions regarding the digital recording of dance. I go on to outline the field of 'choreographic objects', in reference to writing from deLahunta (2013a), Leach (2013) and Zuniga Shaw (2014), addressing the ways in which the objects pose related, yet distinct questions from those addressed in relation to recordings. I go on to provide an overview of some of the key methods and frameworks used for the analysis of works of dance art in the western theatre tradition. I start to explore relationships between dance analysis models, critical theory and dance appreciation.

Chapter Three is the methodology chapter. It highlights and negotiates the ways in which various frameworks interact throughout the research. I outline my method, which involves literature analysis, theory testing and construction, and the examination of case studies. I discuss the way in which dance research frequently adopts a postpositivist framework, and compare the methods used by dance scholars to present arguments, with those used by philosophical aestheticians, in order to demonstrate the contrasts between each approach. Further to this, I outline my framework, leaning on Julie Van Camp's (2006) pragmatist approach to dance

⁵ I refer to an unpublished translation by Anna Pakes of Pouillaude's *Le désœuvrement Chorégraphique: étude sur la notion d'oeuvre en danse*, published in French in 2009.

philosophy, I explain how I aim to centralise common dance practices, thus advancing and advocating a postpositivist ontological standpoint. This section also considers ontology as a method, comparing and contrasting the use of the term across disciplines. In relation to computational ontologies, I discuss the method of modelling, and explain how the construction of the model, presented in Chapter Thirteen serves this research. I justify the validity of philosophical ontology for this enquiry, and theorise the interplay between abstract ontological enquiry and the examination of concrete case studies.

Chapter Four further explores issues of scoring and recording. Building on the foundations laid in Chapters Two and Three, I start to test and question established modes of conceptualising dance scores. I go on to outline the way in which the term refers to a wide range of objects and practices, suggesting categories for understanding the various forms of score and their relationship to both work and performance.

Chapter Five challenges views presented by David Carr (1987) and McFee (1992, 2011) that recordings do not provide access to the work. I outline the flaws in this perspective, demonstrating how common social practices suggest that we are able to adequately access dance through recorded representations, going on to claim that this problematises the ontological schemas outlined in the Chapter Two. This argument is important because of the role that recordings play in the three case studies. In order to establish the relationship between the work, performance and

‘choreographic object’, it must first be demonstrated how recordings have the potential to provide access to the work.

Chapters Six, Seven and Eight are focussed on the case studies. These chapters are descriptive, in order to provide some initial analysis. Whilst philosophical and theoretical questions are posed here, they are not addressed in depth until later on in the thesis. The emphasis is on providing a detailed account of the objects in order to allow the reader to understand the claims I go on to make about their philosophical significance.

Chapter Six considers *Synchronous Objects* (2009). I provide description and analysis of the site, outlining its key features. Through close consideration of a small number of specific examples, I pay particular attention to the range of approaches deployed by the team and how these reveal an over-arching structuralist framework. Referring back to some of the perspectives outlined in Chapter Two I ask how this site relates to established ways of analysing dance.

Chapter Seven pays attention to *Using the Sky*. The case studies are not presented chronologically; although this example was published after the third case study, I chose to focus on this score next due to its relationship to *Synchronous Objects*. As previously mentioned, *Using the Sky*, was developed as part of Motion Bank, which was commissioned by Forsythe as a further exploration of some of the questions posed by the *Synchronous Objects* project. My examination of Hay’s score once again starts with detailed description, moving on to hypothesise the relationship between

the digital score and Hay's practice, suggesting that the methods and decisions of the team suggest an extension of the practice into the digital sphere. I consider how this framework relates the notion of 'posthumanism', specifically the view articulated by digital theorist N. Katherine Hayles in her book *How we Became Posthuman* (1999).

Chapter Eight's case study is a little different inasmuch as it does not exist online and was not developed under Forsythe's patronage. *A Choreographer's Score* (2012) provides a fitting third example, as it demonstrates how the methods and frameworks adopted in the first two case studies are not exclusive to Forsythe's interests. Drawing comparisons between the case studies helps to build the argument that 'choreographic objects' are indicative of a larger class of entities, than the small number of examples discussed in this thesis. This chapter pays close attention to the methods used to develop the score and outlines its intertextual analytic framework. Furthermore I specifically consider the role of the DVD, in order to think about the relevance of digital technology.

Chapters Nine and Ten ask *what* these objects are. Chapter Nine draws on all three case studies and refers back to Chapter Four in order to ask; are these objects 'scores'? I outline the ways in which they elude the articulations offered in Chapter Four, and propose scoring as a form of ontological enquiry and knowledge dissemination. The specific nature of the 'choreographic object' is further theorised in Chapter Nine, which pays attention to the suggestion from Cvejić (2012: 8) and

deLahunta (2013a: 2),⁶ that these entities offer a form of ‘poetics’. Further extending the examination of ‘posthumanism’, I propose that the use of technology allows for the development of a form of ‘posthuman poetics’.

Chapter Eleven moves on from the consideration of *what*, to ask *why*? Here I consider the artistic and cultural context for the development of ‘choreographic objects’ within the UK, mainland Europe and the USA. Drawing on Leach’s work (2006, 2012, 2013), I outline the knowledge-oriented context of their production. Furthermore, I suggest that the foregrounding of labour and non-hierarchical structuring of process and performance relate to Marxist (1887) conceptions of value, problematising traditional aesthetic theories. I go on to consider how choreographic process is shared through performance, considering works by Burrows and Fargion (2014) and Davies (2014). I draw connections between performance works and ‘choreographic objects’, regarding the motivations and incentives for foregrounding choreographic labour and knowledge.

Chapters Twelve and Thirteen consider the philosophical impact of ‘choreographic objects’ on the perception, identity and ontology of the work. Chapter Twelve considers how the multiplication and reconfiguration of properties reveals features of the work not accessible in performance alone, thus challenging empiricist modes of art appreciation. Building on this discussion, Chapter Twelve teases out the

⁶ I am working with a version of this article available on the *Motion Bank* website. It has been published in various other places therefore the page numbers will vary between each publication.

relationship between the work, performance and ‘choreographic object’, considering the notion of ‘aesthetic empiricism’,⁷ which suggests that the perception of art works should not refer to any external information. I assess the applicability of this notion in relation to dance and the dissemination of ‘choreographic knowledge’.

Chapter Thirteen focuses on the ontological repercussions of the case studies, addressing a question at the heart of this enquiry. I ask whether the work is changed via its re-presentation through the ‘choreographic object’. Thinking through this question involves considering once again the nature of dance works, specifically whether they can be thought of as capable of change. In the second part of the chapter I propose a model, arising from my analysis, to help others to analyse and theorise ‘choreographic objects’. The Choreographic Objects Model uses dance analysis frameworks from Janet Adshead *et al* (1988) and Foster (1986) as a point of departure, drawing attention to the features and relations of the objects to think through their impact on the work. In this chapter I outline some of the complexities regarding the distinctions between analysing the work, considering the nature of the object, and the hybrid nature of such encounters.

⁷ Both David Davies (2004) and Peter Lamarque (2010) suggest that this term was coined by Gregory Currie (1989).

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Dance Ontology

This thesis draws primarily on literature from Philosophy, Dance, Cultural and Performance Studies. The philosophical framework arises primarily from Analytic Philosophical Aesthetics. However, Continental Philosophy has had a significant impact on recent discourses in Dance Studies and Performance Studies, meaning that such scholarship also informs the work, albeit in a less direct way than the literature from the Analytic field of Philosophy.

The way in which dance works are physically present only temporarily has been the focus of much discussion in Dance and Performance Studies. It has led to scholars claiming that dance is particularly ephemeral. For example, performance theorist André Lepecki traces the acknowledgement of dance's "self-erasure" (Lepecki 2004: 125) back to Jean-George Noverre's *Letters on Dancing and Ballets* from 1760. Its ephemerality has often been considered a problematic feature of the form, and potentially one of the reasons that dance is not discussed as widely as theatre and music. Marcia Siegel suggests that, "[dance] doesn't stay around long enough to become respectable or respected. Its ephemerality is mistaken for triviality" (in Lepecki 2004: 130). Phelan claims that the non-reproducibility of performance makes it "the runt of the litter of contemporary art" (1993: 148) and Maxine Sheets-Johnstone asks, "[w]ho in fact wants to study movement? It won't stay still!" (2011: 399). Described by Arbeau as "dance's lament" (in Lepecki 2004: 125), the

disappearance of dance has generated an interest in the preservation of performances, in the form of notating, writing, recording and archiving, with Arbeau suggesting that dance's ephemerality can be overcome with writing (see Lepecki 2004: 125), and McFee setting out to "acknowledge its permanence" (1992: 89). Although performances are disappearing as they appear, the way in which we can re-stage, remember and discuss works suggests that they exist outside of performance.

These discourses point to the complex ontology of dance. The term 'ontology' is used slightly differently in different contexts. Here I use it in the philosophical sense, to refer to a mode of enquiry concerned with understanding the metaphysical nature of the world. Ontological questions include; what kinds of things exist? How do entities come into existence? And can abstract, as well as physical entities be said to exist? In relation to art, ontology asks metaphysical questions about the nature of its existence, as opposed to focussing on its value, impact, social function and so on. Dance ontology is addressed from multiple perspectives. For example, ontological discourse in Continental Philosophy and Phenomenology appears to associate the term with the notion of 'being' in relation to the activities of dancing and watching. Scholars such as Alan Badiou (2005), Jose Gil (2006) and Erin Manning (2013) have considered the ontology, or essential nature of dance movement, its relationship to time, and the sensory and phenomenological experience of both performing and watching dance. Ontological discourses in Dance and Performance Studies tend towards discussions of the role of specific elements of dance,⁸ and how the removal

⁸ For example Lepecki's discussion of stillness (2006) and Phelan's account of liveness (1993).

of these impact on the nature of the form.⁹ These discourses are of interest, and play a role in the study, however the key focus is on the conceptualisation of the work of dance art, as opposed to the politics or phenomenology of dancing. This particular way of thinking about ontology is adopted by philosophers working in Analytic Philosophical Aesthetics, where attention is focussed on the notion of the work, asking questions such as; what is a dance work? In what way does it exist? Aesthetician Aime L. Thomasson provides a particularly useful description of ontological enquiry, suggesting that,

[d]etermining the ontological status of works of art involves determining the conditions under which a work of art comes into existence, remains in existence, and is destroyed (persistence conditions) and also the conditions under which works of art are *one and the same* (identity conditions) (Thomasson 2006: 245).

These questions are at the heart of this research, as I consider how 'choreographic objects' reveal ontological features of dance works. Each approach to ontological enquiry shares a concern with considering the nature of being. In this context I am specifically concerned with the nature of dance works and their re-presentation through digital media.

Ontological debates in Philosophical Aesthetics are well established, vast and ongoing.¹⁰ Despite various differences of opinion, there is a relatively un-contentious distinction drawn between 'singular' and 'multiple' art forms (Davies 2003: 156).

⁹ Pakes (2015) suggests that ontological discourse in this field is linked to politics and perhaps a resistance to the idea that dance can be reduced to a set of parameters.

¹⁰ See Currie (1989), Hanfling (1992) and Thomasson (2005, 2006), for discussions of some of the key ontological issues across art forms.

Singular art forms, such as painting are embodied in a single object, whereas in the case of multiple art forms, such as literature, music and dance there can be many instances of the same work.

Goodman also draws a distinction between art forms, but in a slightly different way. He uses the terminology 'autographic' and 'allographic' (1976) and explains the difference through the example of forgery. Goodman suggests that even if a fake painting were *exactly* the same aesthetically and perceptually, it would still not be the same thing as the original painting (1976: 103-112), thus demonstrating the significance of the material object. On the other hand, he suggests that it is not possible to forge a musical work, explaining that,

[p]erformances may vary in correctness and quality and even in 'authenticity' of a more esoteric kind; but all correct performances are equally genuine instances of the work (Goodman 1978: 113).

The term 'autographic', applies to works where the distinction between the original and the forgery is significant (1976: 113). Contrasting the autographic, is the 'allographic', referring to art forms that are non-fakable, such as music and dance (1976: 113). These categories are not exactly the same as the distinction between singular and multiple works. Levinson (2011) points out that the definition of autographic arts can apply to both singular and multiple forms (2011: 90).

Levinson offers modifications to Goodman's definition, drawing attention to the way that autographic multiple arts are duplicated, as a way of determining authentic and inauthentic instances (2011). He suggests that, in the case of multiple autographic art forms some duplicates are genuine, but that, "no duplicate is a genuine instance of a work *irrespective of its actual physical means of production.*" (Levinson 2011: 93).

Thus, he clarifies that if it is possible to have exact duplicates of a work, which count as authentic irrespective of how they were made, the art form would not be autographic. He is not arguing that the artist must produce each instance for them to be genuine, but that they must be produce via the relevant mechanism, or "arch form" (2011: 91).

Goodman suggests that for autographic arts, authenticity is determined through the consideration of historical facts, such as by establishing that a specific canvas was painted by Rembrandt (1976: 116). He refers to these facts as a work's "history of production" (1976: 122). A work's history of production also explains the way in which something possesses art-status, as opposed to being merely a piece of canvas, or a group of people moving. The authenticity of allographic art forms on the other hand is, at least theoretically, determined in reference to a relevant notation (Goodman 1976: 121). However, this claim is complicated by dance (Goodman 1976: 121), which has no universal, or even widely used notational system and therefore does not fit neatly within Goodman's categories. This issue has been addressed by a variety of scholars. Margolis (1981), for instance argues that dance is autographic, with each performance dependent upon the dancers who instantiate it. According to Cvejić (2015: 10), Pouillaude suggests that dance has both autographic and

allographic features, before suggesting that it is an allographic form that is not amenable to notation.¹¹

The central role of the dancer has led scholars such as David Carr (1987) to suggest that dance works are distinct from the other performing arts. In 'Thought and Action in the Art of Dance' (1987), Carr suggests that although the creation of all artworks is reliant upon human action (1987: 345), this is particularly apparent in dance. He suggests that,

[i]n the art of dance we are confronted, more than in any other art form, with a circumstance in which both the instrument or vehicle of expression of artistic ideas and the intentions *and* the physical embodiment of the art work itself are in themselves just forms or modes of human *action* (Carr 1987: 346).

This implies that dance depends upon the dancer in a way that sets it apart from other art forms. Carr suggests, for example that one can appreciate certain qualities of a play through reading the text, but that "[c]horeography just *is* the making of dances (not the mere 'writing' of them)" (1987: 346). He also clarifies the difference to music, suggesting that a composer is not reliant upon the performers to the same degree as the choreographer (Carr 1987: 346-347). He claims that,

[t]he composer may make music by means other than employing musicians whereas I should argue that the choreographer has no other resources than the employment of dancers (Carr 1987: 347).

¹¹ Although I have access to a translation by Pakes of one chapter of Pouillaude's text, this claim is seemingly made in a section that is not yet available in English.

Therefore Carr is apprehensive about the role of notation, suggesting that it is incapable of capturing the interpretational and “meaning-laden” nature of dance movement (1987: 355).

Following Carr, McFee (2011) further emphasises the fundamentally human nature of dance. He distinguishes between dance and music by referring to the form’s physical nature. He claims that musicians produce the sound, but that dancers do not produce the dance, “rather, they *are* the dance” (2011: 33). McFee concurs with Carr that dancers are intrinsic to the dance in a way that musicians are not, claiming that dancers’ movement instigates the dance and that nothing else could do this (McFee 2011: 33).

Unlike painting, which has a stable original, and music, which usually corresponds to a score, dance works usually have no set original or determining text. So, because a dance work is not solely embodied in a singular instance, it seems fair to suggest that it is not a physical object, nor a particular event. How then does a dance work exist outside of performance? One option would be to consider it as a purely mental entity. R.G. Collingwood (1938) takes this view; suggesting that a work of art can be complete in the mind of the artist. It is perhaps possible to extend this line of thinking to propose that outside of performance dance works exist purely as mental ideas and traces. However, this suggestion runs into problems when we think about the vast variation in how people remember works. If every individual memory constituted its own dance work object it would arguably be impossible to ascribe works any sharable features. How then do they exist? Writing about musical works, philosopher Lydia

Goehr, suggests that they are ‘ontological mutants’ due to the way in which they cannot be thought of simply as physical, mental or ideal objects (1992: 2). Although the finer points of dance work ontology highlight significant differences to music, it is an equally ‘mutant form’, eluding simple explanation and categorisation.

Scholars who have addressed the ontology of dance include Anderson (1983), Carr (1987), Conroy (2013a), Margolis (1981), McFee (1992, 2011), Meskin (1999), Pakes (2013), Sparshott (1995) and Van Camp (1998). Although there is not always agreement about the most appropriate way to explain the nature of dance works, many consider the type/token schema first introduced by linguist Charles Sanders Peirce (1906) and developed for art by Margolis (1959) and Richard Wollheim (1975) useful. Under this schema each dance work is considered an abstract ‘type’, made present through the physical ‘token’ of the performance.

Wollheim uses literature to demonstrate how the schema operates. He suggests that a novel is a type, of which every copy is a token (1975: 80). Under this notion therefore every performance of the work can be considered to be a token, providing it meets the relevant constraints or ‘identity conditions’. A key condition of this schema is that all tokens are equal. This is most clearly illustrated by borrowing Wollheim’s discussion of literature. When faced with two copies of a novel, we do not try to determine which one most embodies the work. One may be older, printed in a different typeface, or even in another language, however both books are equally an instance of the novel. The same can be said of performances. Petipa’s *Sleeping Beauty* (1890) may be performed by The Royal Ballet or a group of school children whilst one

version may be better than the other they are both versions of *Sleeping Beauty*. This way of thinking about dance works and performances is helpful as it explains how there can be various different instances of the same thing.

Dance Philosopher Anna Pakes offers a comprehensive account of dance work ontology in her essay 'The Plausibility of a Platonist Ontology of Dance' (2013). Pakes responds to discourse regarding the ontology of musical works, considering specifically the relevance of a platonist¹² account. Julian Dodd (2000) advances a platonist ontology of music, suggesting that works are purely abstract sound structures (2000: 425).¹³ Under this model neither the context of the work's composition nor the way it is performed are essential to its identity (Dodd 2000: 425). Furthering this discussion in 2007 Dodd employs the concept of 'sonicism' (2007: 2), which suggests that, "works are identical just in case they sound exactly alike" (2007: 2). Under this theory, whether a work is played live by an orchestra, from a recording, or by a school band, each instance is an example of the work, as long as it instantiates the required sound structure. A contentious feature of this proposal is that the work does not in fact need to be 'played' at all. Identifying the work purely as a sound structure implies that a musical work can be accidentally instanced; by a child hitting pots and pans for example. Pakes asks whether Dodd's account help us to understand

¹² Pakes explains that contemporary platonism derives from Ancient Greek philosopher, Plato's theory of forms, but does not explicitly reference his views, therefore the term is not capitalised (2013: 84).

¹³ There are multiple propositions offered in the ontology of music, many of which differ significantly from Dodd's view (see Kania 2006, Kivy 2001, Levinson 2011 amongst others).

dance works, outlining some of the issues with this view in relation to dance, she suggests that,

[i]n attempting to develop a platonist ontology of dance, we might be tempted to identify dances with movement structures discovered in the choreographic process and instanced in performance (Pakes 2013: 95).

However, as Pakes explains, conceptualising dance works as structures of movement would imply that they are identified by how they look, which does not exactly reflect the way we conceive of dances, especially given their relationship to sound (Pakes 2013: 95).

A further problem with conceptualising dance works purely as movement structures arises when we are faced with works that are not identified through the repetition of a certain sequence of movement and are essentially dependent upon communicating certain concepts. In *Writing Dancing in the Age of Postmodernism* (1994) Sally Banes discusses the impact of experimental choreographic collective Judson Dance Theatre on the development of choreographic methodologies. Judson Dance Theatre was a group of dance makers working in New York City in the 1960s, comprising artists such as Yvonne Rainer, Lucinda Childs, Simone Forti, Robert Dunn, Steve Paxton and Hay, among others. They developed avant-garde choreographic practices, ran workshops and gave performances.

Banes suggests that,

[a]esthetic questions about the nature and meaning of dance and of movement were raised in the workshop and concerts, among them — fundamentally — the identity of a dance work, the definition of dance, and the nature of technique (Banes 1994: 211).

The techniques developed during this time have been hugely influential in the development of contemporary dance practice.

Banes describes Robert Dunn's workshop which; inspired by experimental composer John Cage, involved activities such as leading participants through 'chance scores', and various rules structures. Techniques included borrowing arrangements from movement scores and working with time constraints (Banes 1994: 212 - 213). One of the key ideologies of Judson Dance Theatre was a resistance to the hierarchy associated with Classical Ballet. This is evident in the development of these choreographic approaches, some of which do not determine specific movements, thus allowing for non-trained performers and individual interpretation. Although some of the works developed during this period are arguably repeatable by performing a specific sequence, others are more flexible. Such methods are now fairly commonplace in dance-making, meaning that the question is posed as to how such works can be identified if not through the recognition and repetition of certain movements.

In order to understand the nature of such works, dance scholar and practitioner Sarah Rubidge introduces the notion of 'open' works (2000a), suggesting that this term refers to,

a work which, by design, does not exhibit a stable temporal progression and/or material form from instantiation to instantiation (Rubidge 2000a: 7).

Open works look different every time they are performed. They might rely upon improvisation or respond to a set of rules. Due to the way that the work is not identified through a certain set of movements; features such as the title, rules, format, context and performers may indicate the work. Therefore to conceive of the work as an abstract structure of *movement* is problematic.

How then can we determine what the work is? In the case of open works we might want to think of the work as an idea, or a set of conditions, an outcome that does not seem to align with Dodd's platonist sound structures. So, do open works align with the conception of works as types? Although we may want to disagree with the idea of a dance work as a structure of *movement*, there is no requirement that a type is synonymous with set movement structures. Furthermore, it seems feasible to suggest that even open works require structures of some kind. There seems no obvious reason to dispute the claim that works that are not indicated through movement cannot be considered types. However, there are some features of platonist types that need addressing. Importantly, they are unchangeable (Dodd 2007: 4). This is a key point in the development of this discussion, as this perspective conceptualises the work as an abstract, stable and unchanging entity, which means that changing

cultural perspectives can have no impact on the nature of the work *per se*, only on audience perceptions of it. Furthermore, it can be argued that if a work is incapable of change, revisions and alterations that disrupt its essential features cannot count as authentic instances.

The question of change is addressed by Rubidge, who suggests that open and closed works require different ontological accounts (2000a: 6-7) and that the unchanging nature of closed works have an “ontology of substance” (2000a: 6), whilst open works are more appropriately explained in relation to an “ontology of flux” (2000a: 7), implicating metaphysical instability. This leads to problems with the type/token schema, as it does not allow for the fluidity encountered in open works. However, conceptualising the work as a type is not the only option. Other ontological proposals have been offered, including Norm-Kinds (Wolterstorff 1975) and action types (Currie 1989), similarly David Davies (2004) has suggested that all types of artworks are performances undertaken by the artist. Thomasson points out that, like Collingwood, Jean-Paul Sartre also places high significance on the relationship between human consciousness, imagination and artworks (2006: 247). However, none of these suggestions have been as fully explored in relation to dance as the type/token schema, which I therefore use as a point of departure to hypothesise the metaphysical nature of dance works.

I advocate an ontology of flux for both open and closed works, suggesting that works are human constructs and are therefore capable of change, alongside human practices. Thomasson’s view, inspired by philosopher Roman Ingarden, is that there

are abstract artefacts that lack a spatio-temporal location, (such as dance works) but that are created as opposed to eternally existing, and that can therefore change and cease to exist (2006: 247). In reference to her earlier work (1999), she suggests that,

[o]n this model, through their creative activities authors and composers bring things into existence that (unlike platonist abstracta) depend in various ways on human intentionality, and are capable of change and destruction (Thomasson 2006: 247).

Thomasson's non-platonist ontological positioning offers a view that allows for change, which seems appropriate in relation to dance. Dance works seem to evolve, as they are often revised and re-presented in various contexts. A key area of interest in this research concerns the ways in which 'choreographic objects' alter the audience's conception of the work. The question therefore is posed as to whether this alters the identity of the work, or whether it can truly be conceived of as entirely independent from human perceptions. Through the discussion of three case studies I go on to suggest that dance works are at least partially constructed via the perceptions of those who receive them.

What is a 'Choreographic Object'?

As mentioned briefly in Chapter One (p.1), the term 'choreographic object' arises from Leach, deLahunta and Whatley and an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded research project they ran in 2008, entitled 'Choreographic Objects: Traces and Artifacts of Physical Intelligence'. The term was used by William Forsythe in his 2008 essay of the same name. The research project was concerned with

considering the cultivation of digital objects as a means of exchange between dance and other disciplines (Beyond Text, n.d.). It brought together dance artists Wayne McGregor, Davies, Forsythe and Emilio Greco | PC, each of whom had been individually exploring the potentials of digital technology to document, examine and disseminate aspects of their work (Leach 2009). The 'Choreographic Objects' project brought them into dialogue to consider the role, motivations and processes of using technology to communicate aspects of their practice and works. In this context the term refers to digital entities that explore and disseminate choreographic principles.

A key question for this research is, 'what is a choreographic object?' I ask this question from an ontological perspective, meaning that I am not concerned with defining the term, rather I question the nature of these objects, in particular their relationship to the dance work and works that they excavate, analyse and re-present. Although these objects take many forms they share the motivation to examine the nature of dance making in relation to a specific artist's practice. Idiosyncrasy plays an important role in these objects. Zuniga Shaw points out the relevance of the artist-led nature of such projects, suggesting that one of the strengths of artist-driven research is the "tendency to invest inscriptions with rich qualitative, experiential information as well as that which is more easily measured" (2014: 98). This is certainly a significant feature of most 'choreographic objects', which often comprise an array of methods and modes of representation.

Leach furthers this claim, suggesting dance's lack of universal mode of representation can be seen as a motivating force for the development of 'choreographic objects'. He writes that,

[t]he artists and the research teams involved in making choreographic objects see themselves as prototyping forms in which to make such representations. In doing so, it is explicit that they consider themselves to be taking charge of demonstrating the possibilities for sustained engagement with and critique of dance making. The challenge is in finding forms of representation that are true to choreography's form of creativity (Leach 2013: 5).

This articulation is particularly helpful for understanding the motivations and challenges of producing 'choreographic objects'. However, there are many questions regarding their aims, functions and impact that remain, and are addressed throughout this investigation. Of specific interest is the notion of 'choreographic knowledge' raised by Zuniga Shaw. She suggests that,

[t]he twin questions of what constitutes choreographic knowledge and what traces it may or may not leave behind are perennial concerns in dance (Zuniga Shaw 2014: 95).

Broadly construed the term can be understood as referring to the knowledge created by and embedded within choreographic acts, but the question of exactly what constitutes choreographic knowledge and how or if it can be shared is further addressed in this research.

'Choreographic objects' are indicative of a broader and increasing interest in western Contemporary Dance practice with examining and disseminating choreographic

processes. As mentioned in Chapter One (pp. 1 – 2) the articulation and examination of choreographic process currently plays a significant role in dance studies and practice. It is shared and discussed in a variety of academic, artistic and performative contexts. More than ever before, post-show discussions, artistic blogs, books, archives, seminars and sharings provide opportunities for choreographers, alongside dancers and researchers, to examine their individual methodologies. However, a choreographer discussing his/her work is not an entirely new phenomenon, for example as long ago as 1959 Doris Humphrey published *The Art of Making Dances*, which offers a detailed guide to choreography. By the late 1950s other artists, such as Laban had also started to theorise movement and choreography, however at this time the process of articulating choreographic methods and theories was relatively new, for example, Humphrey suggests that compositional theories for dance did not emerge until the 1930s (1987: 15 – 19). She proposes that this shift was a response to the social upheaval of the first world war, which caused dancers to ask themselves serious questions about what they were dancing about and the worth of the form, pointing out that this thinking was particularly evident in the United States and Germany (Humphrey 1987: 17).

More recently there have been other approaches to sharing choreographer's voices. In the UK these include *The Dance Maker's Portfolio* (1998), edited by Jo Butterworth and Gil Clarke. This was the result of *The Greenhouse Effect*, a collaborative research project between The Centre for Theatre Studies at Bretton Hall and Yorkshire Dance, which ran between 1997 and 1999, and considered the choreographic processes of various contemporary choreographers. Furthermore, the Study of Dance conference

series, which took place in the 1980s involved the analysis of choreographic practices, demonstrated in the publication 'Choreography: Principles and Practice' (1986) edited by dance scholar Janet Adshead.

These last two examples involve theorists analysing choreographer's works, sometimes alongside the artist, but the *artist-led* research discussed by Birringer (2013) and Zuniga Shaw (2014) is a relatively new phenomenon. The field is manifest through a proliferation of publications. Texts such as Burrows' *A Choreographer's Handbook* (2010), Hay's *Lamb at the Altar: The Story of a Dance* (1994) and *My Body the Buddhist* (2013), and Rosemary Butcher and Susan Melrose's *Choreography, Collisions and Collaborations* (2005) offer readers first-hand accounts of the methodologies of individual artists. Unlike Humphrey's text, which offers a compositional theory, intended to systematise dance making, and arguably promoted her specific approach as a choreographic method, these publications do not aim to offer a universal system, but represent a unique approach to choreography, exemplified through the design, language, images and so on. Such publications can be seen to shape the way readers and viewers see and understand dance. In this way they share key features with 'choreographic objects', however I draw a distinction between artist-led publications and 'choreographic objects', which are distinguished through two central features. Firstly, they use technology as a key method for articulation; secondly, they are the result of collaborative research.

The role of technology in the appreciation, interpretation and analysis of dance is of particular interest. The evolution of artistic practices during the twentieth century

heralded various philosophical and analytic methodologies. Ways of understanding art were constantly re-adjusting to new art-making practices and styles. Dance was no exception to this constant recalibration. The emergence of Dance Studies as an academic field in the UK and USA 1980s, and the development of dance analysis was largely supported by the adoption of existing linguistic and aesthetic frameworks (Bunker *et al* 2013: 6, O'Shea 2010: 6, Rowell 2009: 137).

Dance Analysis

The consideration of dance analysis frameworks plays an important role in this research. Dance scholarship and analysis has a well-established relationship with linguistic theory. In the second edition of the *Routledge Dance Studies Reader* (2010), dance theorist Janet O' Shea observes that,

[o]ne of the most pivotal shifts for dance studies was the expansion of semiotics into the analysis and interpretation of choreography (O' Shea 2010: 6).

Semiotics is an analysis system originating in linguistics, which involves decoding 'signs', such as words, in order to understand their significance or meaning. Early semiotic methods were developed at the start of the twentieth century, by Ferdinand de Saussure in France, and Charles Sanders Peirce in the USA (Counsell and Wolf 2001: 2). Saussure was instrumental in the development of the structuralist movement in linguistics and philosophy. As previously mentioned (p.31), some of Peirce's work went on to be adopted by aestheticians to explain the nature of multiple art forms.

As O'Shea explains, semiotics and structuralism were influential in the early stages of academic dance research and analysis. She suggests that being able to relate to structuralist thinking allowed dance studies to establish itself as "an autonomous field", and to demonstrate its legitimacy (O' Shea 2010: 6). She refers to Adshead's early work as a good example of the application of structuralist methodologies to dance. Adshead's *Dance Analysis Theory and Practice* (1988), co-authored with Valerie A Briginshaw, Pauline Hodgins and Michael Huxley, proposes a systematic approach to dance analysis. It contains a model comprising four stages, which address, 'Components', 'Form', 'Interpretation' and 'Evaluation'. The model was created in response to the emergence of specialist dance degrees in the UK, and recognition of the "shaky theoretical underpinnings of the study of dance" (Adshead 1988: 5). Movement analysis systems such as those developed by Laban and anthropologist Judith Lynne Hanna (1979), had been developed prior to the *Dance Analysis* model, however, this was the first system that concentrated on the dance *work*, as previous approaches, such as those developed by Laban and Hanna were concerned with analysing movement in various contexts as opposed to focussing specifically on dance.

Proposing a method for the analysis of art contradicts traditional ways of thinking about appreciation. Discourses in Aesthetics, dating back to Emmanuel Kant (1892), and developed by Clive Bell (1969), Jerome Stolnitz (1969) and others, suggest that art should be contemplated and appreciated purely for its beauty and form, rather than on an analytic level. For example, in 'The Aesthetic Attitude' (1969), Stolnitz

suggests that art works requires a particular form of aesthetic attention. He explains that the 'aesthetic attitude' is adopted whenever people attend to something purely for the enjoyment of how it looks, sounds or feels (1969: 19). He defines the aesthetic attitude as "disinterested and sympathetic attention to and contemplation of any object of awareness whatever, for its own sake alone" (1969: 19). Stolintz's view is demonstrative of an empiricist paradigm; it encourages the spectator to attend to art purely for its own sake, and without recourse to external information.

Analysis challenges the idea that the perception of art should be purely contemplative. However, Adshead *et al*'s model does demonstrate a formalist stance and can therefore, to an extent be seen as encouraging 'disinterested' attention. For example, although the socio-cultural context is mentioned in Adshead's model (1988: 114-115), there is little discussion of causal features, external references or the biography of the choreographer. It offers a structuralist paradigm insomuch as it encourages users to address the features embodied *within* the performance. The model is also typically formalist in the way that it urges deconstruction and discussion of the relationship between components. Adshead's account places the responsibility of meaning construction with the reader, and does not suggest that understanding is linked to knowledge of choreographic intention or process. This model can therefore be said to follow anti-intentionalist and poststructuralist theories of authorship.

The role of the artist or author's intention has been discussed in great detail in Philosophical Aesthetics; a debate ignited by philosophers William Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley's assertion that,

the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946: 468).

Although this suggestion has been widely critiqued, most notably by Noël Carroll (1992), it aligns with traditional Kantian paradigms outlined previously. Of particular interest in this research is the way in which the author is foregrounded in 'choreographic objects'. Semiotic and structuralist methods implicitly respond to authorial intention. Although they do not necessarily directly confront the intended meaning, the analysis of signs and deconstructing relationships, suggest a positivist methodology, concerned with uncovering or discovering a true meaning. This form of analysis was challenged by poststructuralist thinkers such as Roland Barthes, who famously denounced the author as the authority in matters of meaning in his 1967 article 'The Death of the Author'. As previously mentioned this way of thinking informed the development of Dance Studies, and is evident in Adshead *et al's* model, through which the reader is granted authority and authorial intention is not explicitly discussed. Perhaps somewhat paradoxically however, the activity of formal and structural analysis implies meaning has been consciously constructed, and can therefore be discovered.

The cultural pluralism of the 1990s meant that the acknowledgment of multiple possible readings, and recognition of the culturally embedded nature of interpretation became important. Writing in 2003, dance theorist Helen Thomas suggests that,

the boundaries of dance scholarship are also being eroded through the impact of the challenges posed to the unity of theory and method by feminist scholarship, postmodernist and postructuralist thought (Thomas 2003: 2).

As critical theory expanded, the methods and frameworks used in Dance Studies multiplied. Ideologies and paradigms mentioned by Thomas challenged structuralist approaches and proposed alternative frameworks for analysis, seeking methods that allowed for context specific meaning.

This cultural shift is demonstrated by Adshead's (now writing under the name Adshead-Lansdale) later work on Intertextuality in dance. The term 'Intertextuality' was introduced by French literary theorist Julia Kristeva in 1966.¹⁴ Intertextual analysis in dance involves recognising the way that the dance text refers to other cultural texts, beyond the structure of the work itself. Adshead Lansdale states that intertextuality,

rests on the invocation of references to earlier cultural positions, pre-existing icons, previously developed genres, settings for performance and other dominant performance modes (Adshead Lansdale 2008: 3).

¹⁴ According to Alfaro (1996: 268) the concept first appeared in Kristeva's essay 'Word, Dialogue and Novel' (1966).

This demonstrates how, whilst semiotic and structuralist analysis encourages the deconstruction of the closed structure of the text, intertextuality is a poststructuralist concept and encourages the analyst to look beyond the single text. The author is more explicitly present than in structural and semiotic analysis. For example, readers may notice how the dance they are analysing relates to other works by that choreographer, or references biographic information. Intertextual readings are dependent upon the knowledge of the reader, meaning alternative readings are celebrated, therefore, whilst the author is recognised, s/he are not treated as the determiner of meaning.

The implication of this mode of analysis is that all possible readings are legitimate. Adshead points out that this can generate an “excess of signification” (1999: 15). In order to address the potential for infinite or illogical interpretations Adshead refers to Leitch’s adoption of a Wittgensteinian view, suggesting there are a limited number of logical interpretations (Leitch in Adshead 1999: 15). It is important to note here that the limits of the interpretations are drawn by logic, as opposed to the intentions of the author. Intertextuality encourages the autonomy of the reader; interpretation is not concerned with decoding a single meaning - implicitly linked with authorial intention, but with constructing meaning based on subjective understandings and reference points. Thus Kristeva’s theory aligns with Barthes’ in suggesting that the author’s intention is irrelevant to the reader’s interpretation (1977).

The 'choreographic objects' discussed in this research can be seen to utilise established analytic frameworks, yet also usher in new ways of deconstructing dance, which respond to the process and intentions of the choreographer. The artist-led nature of their production has an impact on the way that the work is manifest through the object, which both reveals and reconfigures its properties. Considering established ontological accounts, such as the type/token schema and the notion of open and closed works allows for me to think through the ways in which the objects reveal ontological features of the works they score, simultaneously reconfiguring the way that the works are experienced, and their on-going identity.

The role of technology further contributes to the frameworks used in the development of 'choreographic objects'. For example, this research considers how the rendering of the body through digital technology demonstrates a 'posthuman' framework. This notion, discussed by Rosa Braidotti (2013), Matthew Causey (2007, 2015) and N. Katherine Hayles (1999), amongst others, suggests that the role of technology in our lives has generated a new cultural paradigm in which humans and machines are intrinsically related. I consider this notion in relation to 'choreographic objects', suggesting that the body is extended and re-presented through technology, but calling for pragmatism, and arguing that whilst the boundaries between the actual and the virtual may be shifting, we generally maintain a distinction between the two realms.

Spectatorship

The development of new dances practices often calls for new frameworks. For example, Banes points out how the development of modern and postmodern dance posed problems for established mode of critiquing and evaluating dance (1994: 26). Artists such as Martha Graham deliberately moved away from a preoccupation with form, demonstrated through Classical Ballet, and explored the potential of the body to express emotion. Critics and audiences were required to develop alternative modes of understanding and evaluation.

Graham's choreography served as a catalyst for postmodern dance. Yvonne Rainer's famous 'No Manifesto', clearly outlines the intentions of Rainer and her contemporaries at Judson Dance Theatre to avoid the tendencies of ballet and expressive modern dance. It begins, "NO to spectacle no to virtuosity no to transformations and magic and make-believe" (1965: 178). This manifesto provided a framework for both artists and audience members. Perhaps more importantly, it has been pivotal to the historical reading of the dance made at this time. Understanding Rainer's intention allows for audiences and researchers to appreciate the work in alignment with its politics. Rainer's work *Room Service* (1964) is a good example of

the way that spectatorship was challenged by postmodern dance. The work is described by Rainer as,

a big sprawling piece with three teams of people playing follow-the-leader thru an assortment of paraphernalia which is arranged and rearranged by a guy and his two assistants (Rainer in Banes and Carroll 1994: 28).

The work consists of everyday movement, as the dancers move furniture between rooms, and climb ladders (Banes and Carroll 1994: 28). Carroll suggests that, “[t]he point of the dance is to make ordinary movement perceptible” (1994: 28). Presenting everyday and practical movement as dance questions the form’s dependency on trained bodies and virtuosic movement. Rainer constructed ambiguous scenarios in order to lead the spectator into a dialogue with the work. In order to appreciate this type of choreography audiences were required to engage in the ideas and concepts of the work, as opposed to merely responding to its aesthetics.

The way that postmodernist dance demanded alternative modes of engagement from the spectator echoed shifts taking place in visual art. For example, in *The Return of the Real* (1996) art theorist Hal Foster points out that neo avant-garde art generated an,

implicit shift from a disciplinary criterion of *quality*, judged in relation to artistic standards of the past, to an avant-gardist value of *interest* (1996: xi).

This shift is echoed in the work of Judson Dance Theatre, the value of which resides in the delivery of a specific idea or concept. This approach to dance making laid the foundations for choreographers such as Jérôme Bel, Xavier Le Roy and others, responsible for a wealth of concept – driven¹⁵ dance practices in Europe and the USA during the twentieth and twenty-first century. Foster explains that the shift of value instigated a “partial move from intrinsic forms of art to discursive problems around art” (1996: xi). The shift towards discourse and away from form and expression in visual art was reflected in dance. Features such as technique, form, beauty and expression were replaced with politics, concept and thought, calling for frameworks that involved discourse and concept analysis, as opposed to formal and aesthetic deconstruction.

Recent shifts in cultural theory have further informed discourses that shape and consider dance appreciation. Dance philosopher Aili Bresnahan suggests that,

[i]n dance philosophy there is controversy about how to construe the felt bodily responses that the audience can and often does have when watching a dance performance (Bresnahan 2015).

This issue has been addressed in both Philosophical Aesthetics and Dance Studies.

Some dance theorists, such as Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason (2012) explore the concept of ‘kinaesthetic empathy’ to describe and theorise spectators’ physical

¹⁵ Cvejić (2015: 8) suggests that the use of the term ‘conceptual’ to refer to these practices is incorrect. Pakes (2015) further discusses this issue in relation to questions of ontology and refers to Cvejić’s suggestion that choreographers always work with concepts. I suggest that the term ‘concept-driven’ allows for the acknowledgement that concepts feature widely in choreography, but are more central to the identity and understanding of some works than others.

responses to dance. Philosopher Barbara Montero (2006) has similarly explored the topic of the kinaesthetic sense of both the performer and spectator, using research in neuroscience to develop an argument for proprioception as an aesthetic sense.

Montero's work contributes to a debate in the philosophy of dance regarding the potential difference in perception between trained and non-trained spectators.

Paraphrasing David Davies, Conroy asks,

is the skilled dancer in a privileged position to 'see' what's going on in a dance art performance in virtue of her training? (Conroy 2013b: 203).

She considers Montero's (2013) suggestion that trained dancers are indeed 'privileged' dance appreciators. This argument is based partially on the ways in which dancers accrue knowledge of the form. However, the main focus of Montero's discussion is based on the idea that a dancer's brain responds differently to the work in performance than that of someone who has no physical experience of the steps being performed. This argument has been widely disputed,¹⁶ and I don't want to dwell on the details of this debate here. However, Montero is not alone in the claim that dancers and non-dancers have different spectatorial experiences.

¹⁶ For example, the topic is debated in a number of articles by McFee, Davies and Carroll and Seeley in a special addition of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 71 (2), on 'Dance Art and Science', edited by Conroy and Van Camp (2013c).

Although she does not focus explicitly on the physical responses of the spectator, Melrose similarly suggests that,

‘dance’, to the trained dancer and the experienced choreographer, is ‘*nothing like*’ — or ‘non-identical with’ (Knorr Cetina 2001: 175 – 88) — the ‘dance’ that an expert spectator, reader and educator sees and appraises in terms of her or his own experience (Melrose 2009: 24).

Melrose does not suggest that the trained spectator’s experience is necessarily privileged rather than it is different. Of course, it is important to remember that the experiences and background knowledge of spectators will be vast and varied. It is not the case that all dancers will respond in the same way to a performance.

Consideration of these frameworks is important to this research, as the construction of ‘choreographic objects’ is often concerned with disseminating forms of knowledge to people outside of dance. These debates draw together questions concerning analysis and knowledge, asking what does it mean to possess, develop and transmit ‘choreographic knowledge’? It is possible to see the development of ‘choreographic objects’ as marking another important moment in dance history. Analysing, documenting and disseminating choreographic processes, alongside the final artwork highlights the value of artistic practice, challenging formalist and structuralist frameworks. Furthermore, the positioning of the choreographer at the heart of ‘choreographic objects’ gives authorial intention a central role in interpretation and once again calls for the development of new frameworks for understanding, appreciation and analysis.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Methods and Frameworks

The range of theoretical disciplines and frameworks adopted in this research means that I draw on multiple methods, including philosophical questioning, case study analysis, theory testing, theory generating, literature analysis and argument building. By deploying a case study approach, I generate in-depth analysis of three dance scores in response to new and existing theories. This chapter outlines the methods used and contextualises the project within current research environments, and in relation to relevant theoretical frameworks.

This research is situated within Dance Studies, although it will also refer to and make use of neighbouring fields and draws significantly on literature in Analytic Philosophical Aesthetics. Current research in the arts, humanities and social sciences largely operates under a postpositivist paradigm. In 'Postpositivist Research in Dance' (1999) Jill Green and Susan W Stinson suggest that,

the term *postpositivist* is an umbrella term to describe the variety of approaches to research that have arisen in response to a recognition of the limitations of the positivist tradition in research (Green and Stinson 1999: 92).

As suggested here, postpositivism is a reaction to the priorities of positivism; a paradigm primarily associated with scientific enquiry. Positivists see the world as a knowable entity, the truth about which can be discovered.

As Green and Stinson suggest,

[s]cientific research is based on an assumption that the world is a predictable place, if only we can determine the laws by which it operates (Green and Stinson 1999: 91).

This approach suggests the existence of a findable, objective truth. However, for many researchers within the arts and humanities this is an inappropriate way of seeing the world. Postpositivism is usually concerned with qualitative as opposed to quantitative methods. It arises from an epistemological positioning that sees knowledge as created through human experience, and views reality as socially constructed; challenging the notion of a singular, objective truth that can be discovered through quantifying data.

Echoing to some extent the distinction between positivism and postpositivism, there is an on-going debate in Analytic Philosophical Aesthetics regarding the proper methodology for exploring the ontology of art. The debate centres on what role social practices can be seen to have in establishing the ontological status of art works. For example, Thomasson (2005) suggests that the nature of art works is intrinsically linked to human practices, meaning that works do not have any mind-independent properties and therefore we cannot discover their features. This means that we cannot make revisionary claims about art ontology. Although offering a slightly different perspective, Davies (2009) also argues that human practices ought to constrain metaphysical claims. Dodd (2012, 2013) challenges Thomasson and Davies, arguing that works of art exist independently of human thought and practices,

therefore defending the discovery (or revisionist) model of ontological enquiry and offering a quasi-scientific view, that mirrors, to some extent a positivist framework, through which reality is distinct from human practices.

In accordance with a postpositivist framework and in line with Thomasson (2005), I adopt an ontological stance that sees human practices and the nature of art works as essentially linked. This means that my positioning is an important consideration. Whilst I aim to avoid answering questions *purely* in response to my observations, my background knowledge and experiences inform the development of arguments. My training in Contemporary Dance, experience of watching dance and leaning towards Analytic Philosophy, for example, contributes to the framework of the research. Furthermore, I have a direct connection to Motion Bank, as deLahunta is supervising this research. I consider the objects as a spectator, rather than exploring the methods of their construction as so forth. However, the interplay between my experience of the objects and theory construction is important. At times I use italic text when referring to my own experiences, to highlight how they contribute to the cultivation of theories. Although I adopt a postpositive epistemological view, and therefore treat reality as socially constructed; the methods deployed can be seen as veering towards the middle of the positivist/postpositivist spectrum. This is due to the way that I use philosophical analysis, test existing theories and respond to a hypothesis; namely that 'choreographic objects' reveals and re-configures the ontology of particular dance works. Straddling opposing frameworks is not necessarily a unique or problematic feature, as demonstrated by Bannon (2004: 26-27), who refers to Lather's (2001) view that research might accommodate various different paradigms.

Alongside the other performing arts, dance's ephemerality poses quandaries for the researcher. Live performances cannot be exactly repeated, requiring scholars to negotiate the temporary nature of the subject matter. In *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance* (2011) performance scholars Baz Kershaw and Helen Nicholson suggest that the challenge of researching performance, and the changing nature of the form, has inspired the development of various creative approaches, which move beyond traditional book-based methods (2011: 1). Kershaw and Nicholson suggest that methods such as practice-as-research, archiving and digital performance; attempt to "resist unhelpful dichotomies, and fixed binaries, which separate embodiment and intuition from intellectual practices, emotional experiences and ways of knowing" (Kershaw and Nicholson 2011: 2). In a critique of traditional approaches, the authors suggest that new methods celebrate the "ambiguity" and "messiness" of performance (2011: 2).

Kershaw and Nicholson suggest that:

[r]ather than attempting to resolve or smooth over distinctions between the ephemerality and the materiality of performance that, on first sight might appear incoherent or inconsistent, many of the contributors to this book show how dwelling in the ambiguous space between binaries invites inventiveness (Kershaw and Nicholson 2011: 2).

This evaluation of the current research environment of Performance Studies and Dance Studies suggests that my method is unusual. The use of book-based, philosophical methodology within the current research environment arguably calls for

justification, as it could be seen as a retraction to an out-dated and/or inappropriate set of approaches. My defence can be articulated fairly simply; through logically and rigorously attempting to disambiguate 'choreographic objects' and their relationship to dance ontology, we will find valuable information within the 'messiness' of performance. Furthermore this research will do this without smoothing over the distinction between ephemerality and materiality. Rather, it will make virtue of the complex relationship between the two.

It may appear that using literature from Philosophical Aesthetics as theoretical base poses challenges in relation to this aim. Whilst there is an abundance of convincing work on visual art and musical ontology within this field, dance is somewhat under-explored. However, I pay particular attention the work of Graham McFee (1992, 2011), who has offered comprehensive philosophical accounts for dance. Some of his work can be accused of smoothing over the relationship between ephemerality and materiality, as is demonstrated by his suggestion that dance works are only accessible through the material form of live performance (2011: 112-113). This proposal demonstrates a dismissal of the way in which dance does not neatly divide into the abstract and the physical. Dance works remain in existence outside of performance, and are accessed through memory, language and technology. McFee's claim demonstrates Kershaw and Nicholson's critique of this type of framework. However this is not necessarily a methodological issue, but an ideological one. Furthermore, this opinion is not exclusive to Analytic Philosophy.

Although expressed differently, as discussed in Chapter One (p.12), Phelan also emphasises the significance of the performance event, claiming that ephemerality defines performance (1993: 146). Although performances disappear, works remain in existence, and can be accessed in other ways than through live performance. Smoothing over the complexities of the material and the ephemeral, both McFee and Phelan demonstrate the way that claims which appear to have logical consistency, do not necessarily represent the reality of practice. For example, McFee's claim does not allow for digital works such as dance films, or motion-capture performances; such works further demonstrate the difficult place between the material and the abstract and, presence and absence; reiterating the relevance of this study. It is important to note that philosophical claims are sometimes offered as ideal theoretical notions and are therefore not always intended to reflect practice. For example, Goehr (1992: 25) suggests that this is demonstrated by Goodman's compliance conditions, as outlined in Chapter One (pp.7 - 8). This research, however seeks to generate theory that both reflects and informs dance practices and scholarship.

Importantly, not all philosophers are guilty of avoiding the complexities of performance. Many scholars including Goehr (1992), Thomasson (2005, 2006), Davies (2009), Van Camp (2006), and so forth are concerned with basing philosophical claims in human practices. Furthermore, traditional methods are used in Performance Studies and Dance Studies, to examine performance without negating its fundamental features. This is demonstrated by Rebecca Schneider (2001, 2011) for example, who acknowledges the permanence, yet non-materiality of performance. She suggests in 'Performance Remains' (2001) that performance exists in abstract

form outside of material presence. This allows for performance's permanence without negating its simultaneous ephemerality (Schneider 2001).

Dance Philosophy

The relationship between performance and philosophy is the focus of considerable attention in current scholarship in Performance Studies, much of which originates in, and theorises ideas arising in Continental Philosophy. There are many conversations to be had about the relationship between the two schools of thought. These debates are too vast for this context, however, the way that dance and philosophical enquiry interact is a crucial methodological concern, therefore some consideration of the current perspectives in Performance Studies, and how these relate to Analytic perspectives is important.

The emergent field of Performance Philosophy (Cull and Lagaay 2014) was born out of Performance Studies and seeks to examine the relationship between performance and philosophical thought. There is a strong bias towards Continental Philosophy, acknowledged by Cull and Lagaay in the Introduction to the group's inaugural book, *Encounters in Performance Philosophy* (2014). They attribute this bias to,

the fact that when the majority of Theatre and Performance Studies scholars engage with philosophy, they tend to do so largely via texts and figures conventionally understood as belonging to the Continental tradition (Cull and Lagaay 2014: 4).

This claim is rather general, and there are, of course a number of theatre and performance scholars whose philosophical enquiries respond to the Analytic tradition. Indeed it is possible to argue that the situation is somewhat cyclical and that the dominance of Continental Philosophy within the Performance Philosophy field informs the choices made by scholars, therefore posing the risk of philosophical enquiry in Dance, Performance and Theatre Studies becoming synonymous with Continental scholarship and frameworks.

In 'From Odd Encounters to a Prospective Confluence: Dance – Philosophy' (2015), published in the inaugural issue of the Performance Philosophy network's journal, Cvejić provides a discussion of some of the ways that dance and Philosophy interact. Although she primarily addresses the work of Continental philosophers such as Deleuze, Spinoza and Badiou, she pays fleeting attention to Analytic Philosophy, if only to justify her dismissal of its usefulness. Cvejić addresses McFee's ontological perspective suggesting that it fails to offer insight into the nature of dance works and performances due to,

its lack of specialist knowledge about dance practice and
secondly, its error of applying the standard of musical notation to
dance (Cvejić 2015: 10).

Whilst I concur with Cvejić that McFee's stance on some issues is problematic, her claims are not entirely convincing, indeed McFee strongly disputes ontological comparisons between music and dance (2011: 113). Furthermore, using a single

perspective to make claims about the entire tradition of Analytic philosophy does not seem fair.

There are many potential reasons for the field's seeming suspicion towards Analytic Philosophical Aesthetics. In particular I suggest that the tensions are methodological and linguistic. Cvejić dismisses the "positivist logic" of Philosophical Aesthetics (2015: 10), pointing to a topic at the heart of this chapter. Whilst there might be a positivist tendency in some philosophical enquiry, especially evident in comparison to the postpositivist frameworks utilised in much of Dance and Performance Studies, not all Analytic philosophers are positivists. Indeed much recent work in contemporary aesthetics has set out to challenge such methods and frameworks. The work of Thomasson (2005, 2006) and Davies (2009, 2004), provide clear, albeit slightly different examples of this. Van Camp's (2006) pragmatist framework further demonstrates a strong resistance to essentialist modes of enquiry. It is important not to confuse the systematic and logical working through of concepts and ideas with a quest for a single objective truth. This leads me to my second point, which is that it seems as though the language of Analytic philosophy may further account for mis-readings or mistrust of the field.

Cvejić (2015: 10) describes Pouillaude's work as utilising more passionate conceptual imagery than that usually adopted by Analytic philosophers. Indeed the modes of

expression are often fairly different, with Continental theorists adopting a more poetic approach to writing. For example, in the prelude to Manning's book *Always More than One: Individuation's Dance* (2013), Continental philosopher Brian Massumi writes,

[n]o sooner do we dive into composition than composition launches itself into a *process* of iteration offering a bounty of variations, thousands and thousands, on any and all behaviours or events. And the notion that the iteration of the process can be inflected, and composition finds the double connotations it has in everyday language; not just a coming-together, but a one (-many) bountifully susceptible to *technique* (Massumi 2013: x).

Here Massumi articulates the central thesis of Manning's text, which following philosopher A.N. Whitehead, argues that the notion of 'one' is in fact always multiple. At the heart of this discussions lies the familiar question how can one thing be both the same and different? This question is articulated rather differently by McFee, who writes,

[dance works] are *multiples*, such that *the very same dance* can typically be performed on two different occasions (say yesterday as well as today) and in two different places at the same time (say, in London and Los Angeles). How should such multiples be described so as the capture the relationship between the work itself (for example, *Swan Lake*) and its performances in London and Los Angeles, both yesterday and today? For all of these are performances of *Swan Lake*: that is, a single artworks is involved (McFee 2011: 37)

Comparing the way that language is used to articulate related questions, it is possible to see where and how a certain disconnection occurs between the two schools of scholarship.

Cvejić's claim highlights an intriguing tension within philosophical methodologies, and one that reoccurs throughout this research. I am interested in how philosophical questioning and reasoning interacts with dance discourse and practice. Challenges include the framing and expression of the debates, so as to be able to talk to both fields. I adopt a narrative philosophical tone; leading the discussion through examples and avoiding purely abstract debates and solely theoretical propositions. The centrality of the case studies allows me to demonstrate the relevance of philosophical theories, as the questions posed by each example relate so closely to existing discourses in Philosophical Aesthetics. Cvejić suggests that, "after centuries of musing on 'what philosophy could *do* for dance', the question is now reversed" (2015: 18 - 19). Here Cvejić refers to the work of Massumi, Manning and Alva Noë as examples of thinking that demonstrates how dance as an activity reframes existing philosophical thought. In this context, I suggest that the consideration of dance as art, through its digital rendering, similarly recalls and challenges existing theories.

It is important to mention that the leaning of Dance Studies away from the Analytic tradition is not a new phenomenon, nor is it solely attributable to the development of the Performance Philosophy field. In the Introduction to *Thinking Through Dance: The Philosophy of Dance Performances and Practices* (2013), editors Jenny Bunker, Anna Pakes and Bonnie Rowell discuss the influence of poststructuralist and postmodern thinking on Dance Studies, suggesting that such discourses are more present in dance discourse those arising in Analytic Philosophy. They suggest that the field has become "bifurcated, with little dialogue between perspectives though there is undoubtedly

some common thematic ground” (Bunker, Pakes and Rowell 2013: 7). Although primarily focussed on the Analytic tradition, the ways in which different theoretical paradigms engage with the same, or related philosophical questions contributes a significant sub-plot to this research. Furthermore, analytic and conceptual frameworks are topics of enquiry, as well as guiding and informing the way the research is conducted and framed. For instance, I consider the relationship between each of my case studies and modes of analysing and conceptualising dance, arising from structuralist, poststructuralist and analytic modes of enquiry.

Case Studies

The inclusion of qualitative, collective case studies will enhance book-based methods.

Psychologist John Creswell (1998) suggests that,

a case study is an exploration of a “bounded system” or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (1998: 61).

Creswell claims that case studies are bound by time and place, highlighting the significance of context (1998: 61-63). This is a particularly relevant feature of my case studies, which were published between 2009 and 2013. Their newness contributes significantly to the nature of the enquiry, as I aim to explore and determine their ontological standing. Furthermore, theorising their context of production and reception contributes to this aim. Moving beyond literature analysis, my method

triangulates between book-based, secondary case studies and first-hand accounts in order to build arguments.

Other approaches to this project would have been possible. For example, I could have explored the nature of dance by making a work. There are numerous examples of practice based research projects that explore the interplay between dance and technology. For example both Rubidge¹⁷ and Simon Ellis¹⁸ have developed significant bodies of work in this field, generating art and research through technology and dance, whilst examining the non-singularity of each of these terms. Projects such as these generate valuable practice-oriented knowledge, however my concern is with the way that our practices, as *spectators* of dance works are evolving. With this in mind I aim to generate knowledge through analysis, theory testing and theory building and through the consideration of a range of artefacts. Following Creswell's suggestions, I contextualise examples in relation to their function, purpose and physical features, and in reference to the author, date and method of development. I assess how the artefact demonstrates, challenges or poses my central questions and attempt to answer these questions through analysis and reasoning, and in reference to existing theories.

Creswell outlines the difficulties of negotiating the tension between the quantity of cases and the depth of analysis, suggesting that researchers usually use no more than four cases (1998: 63). The decision to select three case studies was due partly to the

¹⁷ See <http://www.sensedigital.co.uk>

¹⁸ See <http://www.skellis.net/projects>

wealth of questions generated through each one. Including a fourth would have limited the scope for in-depth analysis, yet reducing the study to fewer than three cases would have reduced the potential for my observations to generalise. Before selecting the final case studies I examined an array of similar examples, the analysis of which informed my thinking about these objects. For example, I analysed dance scholar and Laban specialist Valerie Preston Dunlop's choreological map of Forsythe's work *The Loss of Small Detail* (1991), developed in 2008. This map utilises Laban's analytic principles to map the work in great detail, addressing the concepts, process, staging, structure and so forth. It takes the form of a CD Rom, which includes links to various media, including video clips, textual accounts, photographs and reviews. This example is not referred to as a 'score' but perhaps offers an early example of a related approach. I also considered performative artefacts including, *The Suchness of Heni and Eddie* (2006), a performance lecture by British choreographer Rosemary Lee, in collaboration with dancers Henrietta Hale and Eddie Nixon. This is a DVD of a performance event, which aims to "unpick" and explore Lee's creative process (Lee 2006). The examination of this example raised important questions about the performance of process, which contributed to the thinking underpinning this research.

The final selection was based partially on an interest in the nature of scoring, and the way that each of the objects I address is labelled as a score. Furthermore, I was drawn to the ambiguity of the objects and interested to explore how Forsythe's patronage of the Motion Bank projects might compare and contrast with a similar project arising from a very different practice and paradigm. The different ways that technology is

used in each case study further sparked my curiosity. Through analysing three related, yet distinct examples I suggest that the observations made may apply to other entities belonging to the class of ‘choreographic objects’.

Creswell refers to Yin’s distinction between ‘holistic’ and ‘embedded’ analysis (1998: 3), suggesting that ‘holistic’ approaches address the entire case, whereas ‘embedded’ methods focus on fewer, specific components. Although I provide overview of each object, the majority of the analysis focuses on a small number of specific elements within each case study, thus demonstrating an ‘embedded’ method (Yin in Creswell, 1998: 63). Following recent publications such as performance philosopher Stamatia Portanova’s *Moving Without a Body: Digital Philosophy and Choreographic Thought* (2013), this thesis uses concrete case studies as a point of departure for more abstract theorising (Portanova 2013: 3). The case studies function to demonstrate philosophical concepts and inspire metaphysical probing, in order to (re) think the notion of dance works, and the ways we encounter them. The result of this method is that the selection and consideration of case studies does not propose to be an exhaustive account of the field, rather I probe objects that are of specific interest to the overall theoretical project.

Ontologies and Models

The final chapter provides a visual model, intended to help users access and analyse ‘choreographic objects’. This model arose from an interest in using sketched visualisations to explore philosophical questions. A key claim of this thesis is that

technology allows us to see dance works as existing in forms other than performance. This might include recordings, programme notes, reviews, rehearsal, recollections, scores, sketches, blogs, photographs and so on. These artefacts form a web of abstract, material and virtual objects. Sketching and doodling proved useful in my exploration of the way in which the multiple components of a work inter-relate. This method relates to an approach to ontology arising in Computer Science. Computational ontologists generate charts or 'ontologies', which visualise the relationships between concepts or components. These are primarily used to sort information and communicate data about entities from one context to another (Ceusters and Smith 2011: 103). In 'Switching Partners: Dancing with the Ontological Engineers' (2011) Warner Ceusters and Barry Smith explain that ontologies are now used in other contexts, such as by museums to classify artefacts, and by lawyers to help resolve disputes regarding performing arts and property rights (2011: 104).

Ceusters and Smith discuss their attempt to generate an ontology of motion (2011: 105-106). They intended to create software that would help computers recognise specific dance movements (2011: 106). However, they explain how they encountered a problem at the heart of dance philosophy, namely that in order to commence engineering work they needed to establish what dance is (2011: 108). The ontological complexities of the form made this project difficult, however their paper demonstrates the way in which the method raised existential questions. In a critique of an ontology for the classification of dance, published by the Open Directory Project (2007), Ceusters and Smith outline how examination of the diagram raises questions, such as, "[c]an all dancing activities be considered to be performances, let alone

works of (performing) art?” (2011: 113). They suggest the usefulness of philosophical study for computer engineers in cases such as these (2011: 112-114). I propose that the reverse is also true; that this method of ontological enquiry can perhaps be of benefit to philosophical study, by exposing gaps in our understanding of concepts and posing questions for further enquiry. Ceusters and Smith highlight the complexities of deconstructing movement, and whilst a computational ontology for dance movement may or may not be possible, the process of categorising and formulating taxonomies encourages detailed consideration of the nature of the form. In this research I adopt the method of modelling, extending the approach used in some of the ‘choreographic objects’, to map the elements of the objects and visually conceptualise the way that they relate to each other, leading us close to comprehending what they are, and therefore helping me to address one of my key research questions.

Models and ontologies are not exactly the same thing, however. In ‘Models and Metaphors: Theory Making and the Creation of New Knowledge’ (1999), Penelope Hanstein suggests that,

[m]odels can be an effective way to help researchers see relationships as well as discover new ways to think about the themes, ideas, and conclusions resulting from the research process (1999: 71).

Models are used in various disciplines to visualise the relationships between

components, or to demonstrate stages of a process. Noë proposes that *Synchronous Objects* is a model of *One Flat Thing, reproduced*. He suggests,

[s]cientists — who seek knowledge — frequently make models of phenomena in the domain that interest them. Working with the model, thinking about the model, enables them to think about what is modelled (Noë 2009).

This articulation relates to one of the functions of the model, the construction of which furthered my own thinking and analysis of the objects. However, it is also motivated by a desire to be outward facing and encourage interaction with the objects. As with computational ontologies, models can be used to share concepts. deLahunta and Phil Barnard have developed dance related models,¹⁹ and they point out that models can be used across disciplines, as when information is distanced from its original context it might become possible to see how various fields deal with similar questions and ideas (2011). The use of models for interdisciplinary research is an area further explored by cultural theorists Vivian Van Saaze and Annet Dekker in their paper, 'Surprising Usages of a Documentation Model: On the Notion of Boundary Objects and Beyond' (2013). In discussion of *Capturing Intention*, they outline how they developed a documentation model for dance, which functioned as a 'boundary object', allowing for greater communication between disciplines (2013). The process of modelling concepts arose in scientific research, and thus can be seen as an essentialist, or positivist method. However, the use of models in dance research, as demonstrated by Barnard and deLahunta, and Saaze and Dekker, serve to open up conversation and ignite further analysis. My model similarly adopts this

¹⁹ See <https://blogs.montclair.edu/creativeresearch/2011/04/19/creativity-and-bridging-by-philip-barnard-and-scott-delahunta/>

framework, leaving aspects of the diagram open and basing the visualisation on observations made through philosophical probing, as opposed to reductive categorisations.

Examples o Methods

The following section demonstrates some features of my methodology through two examples, offering different approaches to analysis and argument building. Example one tests an existing theory in order to construct and propose an alternative solution. Example two uses a combination of “descriptive” and “explanatory” theories (Hanstein 1999: 63-64), to examine an example, and build an argument for its ontological impact.

Example One

1.) Identification of an ontological question posed by an example:

We frequently access recordings of live dance works via the Internet. An example of this is a recording of William Forsythe’s *The Loss of Small Detail* (*TLSD*) (1991), uploaded onto *YouTube* in 2010. Online recordings pose many philosophical questions, such as: do these recordings provide access to the work? And, is it correct to claim we have seen a work if we have only watched a recording?

2.) Acknowledgment of existing answer (s) /schemas:

McFee suggests that only live performance can provide access to a dance work, and that recordings are not legitimate forms of the work (2011: 112-113). McFee explains dance works through the type/token schema (2011: 40-43). According to this account, a dance work is an abstract type, and each performance of it is a token of that type. McFee claims that dance works can only be accessed in live performance implies that only live performances can be considered tokens.

3.) Theory testing:

McFee's view does not accurately represent the way that we frequently relate to and discuss dance works. It is common practice to analyse, discuss and refer to works that we have only seen on film. Indeed we often consider ourselves particularly knowledgeable about a work precisely because we have watched it repeatedly on film. It is difficult to dispute the claim that recordings provide knowledge of a work. Imagine a scenario where we were only able to gain knowledge about works that we have experienced live. Dance discourse and scholarship would rapidly diminish. Some may find they suddenly have no knowledge of dance whatsoever. Furthermore, websites such as *YouTube*, and TV programmes like *Strictly Come Dancing*, would no longer show dance, rather they would offer something pretending to be dance. Further extend

this thought experiment to conceptualise the same rules applying to sport, and we are left with a scenario whereby football is a niche game, known only by a few and involving some rather impoverished players! The point here is that dance, like football is a *dominantly* live form, however it is not a *purely* live form.

This outcome implies that recordings can be considered tokens. However, this is problematic for many reasons. Firstly, all tokens must be equal. Whilst one performance can be *better* than another, it cannot be *more* an instance of the work than any other token. Accepting token-status for recordings suggests recordings and live performances as equal. This is problematic due to the way that a recording is dependent upon a performance, yet a performance is not dependent upon recording. There is another problem here, concerning the hierarchy of liveness. It is possible to predict a future in which the recorded and the live are accepted as providing equal knowledge of, and access to the work. This is the case with football; it is acceptable to claim that you saw the match, even if you watched it on TV. However it is hard to imagine that there would not still be a higher status attached to experiencing the game or performance live. This scenario exists not only for sport, but also for nearly all forms of music. The live and the recorded are not, and probably never will be *equal*, this does not necessarily mean, however that they cannot offer equal knowledge of the work.

Despite claims for the ontological similarity of film and performance (Auslander, 1999: Carroll, 2006), it is not the case that a film and a live performance are the *very same thing*. Therefore, the problem remains; what is a recording? And how does it relate to both the performance and the abstract work?

4.) Theory building:

It is possible to suggest that an individual performance, such as Thursday's performance of *TLSD* is a type, allowing for recordings of *TLSD* to be tokens of this type. However, this is not feasible as types are abstract phenomena, with no location in time and space. Perhaps a viable alternative is that the recording is a new type, and each playing of it is a token of the type *A recording of The Loss of Small Detail (TLSDr)*, distinct to the live version of the work (*TLSDI*). This outcome represents common parlance, in response to the question, 'Have you seen *The Loss of Small Detail*?' a perfectly valid response would be, 'I have seen a recording'. However, the relationship between *TLSD*, *TLSDr* and *TLSDI* remains unexplained.

There are further stages to this argument, however this brief example demonstrates how a combination of theory testing and theory generating is applied in this thesis. Whilst this argument does not offer a finite solution to the problem, the process of questioning the nature of recordings, and the appropriateness of the schema sheds light on the metaphysics of this artefact. The use of thought experiments - a device

borrowed from Philosophy - demonstrates the problematics of McFee's claim. I have also developed predictive theories, which reinforce claims for the significance of liveness, and reiterate the value of investigating this subject matter with this particular style of theory testing and constructing.

This example demonstrates the positioning of the research within the positivist/postpositivist spectrum. Although I conclude with no claims for universal truth, the methodology - based in logic and reasoning - points towards a paradigm where such an outcome is feasible. Simply accepting that some people may consider that a recording *is* the work, and others may not, would miss out on the knowledge generated by metaphysical investigation. I suggest that the methods deployed by Analytic Philosophical Aesthetics can be helpful for approaching the difficulties of ephemerality and materiality, primarily because this method avoids abstraction of both subject matter and argument by working closely with literature and schemata, allowing for clarity and consistency.

Pragmatism plays an important role in this research, Van Camp suggests that a pragmatic approach is characterised by a "rejection of essences and [an] emphasis on pluralism, experience and community" (2006: 42). Indeed many discussions follow the logic of my own experiences and those in the dance community. Referring to such practices as 'evidence' of certain theoretical claims requires some qualification. For

example, whose practices am I referring to? Who is part of the 'dance world'? Van Camp suggests,

[t]he art world encompasses overlapping communities of audiences, artists, performers, composers, choreographers, critics, historians, theatre managers, funding agencies, art law attorneys, art students and many more (Van Camp 2006: 42).

She points out that that there are a multitude of activities and ways of talking that occur within such worlds. The dance world is not a single unified voice, but rather refers to a wide range of practices and perspectives. Referring to dance practices therefore necessarily denotes multiplicity and does not offer a single perspective or solution, but in accordance with a pragmatist framework, aims to reject essentialism and foreground the importance of experience (Van Camp 2006: 44).²⁰

In using the term 'dance world' it is also important to recognise my own context and history. Coming from a western Contemporary Dance tradition, and being situated within the UK and within an academic context, my version of the dance world and in particular dance discourse is of course embedded within a specific cultural context. I acknowledge the cultural specificity of the research and do not claim that my observations generalise across all practices or cultural contexts.

²⁰ McFee (2011: 25) uses the notion of 'The Republic of Dance' to conceptualise a similar notion.

Example Two

There are instances in which I discuss an example not in terms of its ontological status, but rather its ontological effect. Here a different method is required, involving both descriptive and explanatory theories (Hanstein 1999: 63-64). This involves working less closely with other scholars' arguments, instead generating my own analysis and theories based on the information provided by the example. This is demonstrated briefly below.

1.) Descriptive theory:

Siobhan Davies RePlay is the online digital archive for British choreographer Siobhan Davies. The archive was created in 2009, by Siobhan Davies and Sarah Whatley, alongside collaborators from Coventry University and Siobhan Davies Dance Company. It houses footage, photographs, written accounts, interviews and so on, spanning Davies' on-going career, from her first professional work in 1977. A particularly interesting feature of the archive are the Kitchen pages, which offer a visual representations of the ways in which components such as sound, lighting, creative stimuli, dancers' notes and costumes contribute to Davies' works *Bird Song* (2004) and *In Plain Clothes* (2006).

2.) Explanatory theory:

By visually exposing the multiplicity of components present in these works, the 'Kitchen' pages demonstrate the way that dance works come into, and remain in existence in forms other than human embodiment. The articulation of the creative process through notes and the sharing of creative stimuli demonstrate how the work is formed through modes other than solely moving in space. The 'Kitchens' do not feature recordings of performances, although these are available elsewhere on the archive. This further demonstrates the decentralisation of the performance, by focussing on the multi-layered nature of the work, which is revealed as constituting multiple physical and abstract components; a feature made visual through the use of digital images and computer technology.

This approach explores an example through describing it, asking; what is this thing? What does it look like? And, what is its intended function? The process of thinking about these questions leads to the next stage of the method, which involves developing explanations. It is different to method one in the way that it approaches metaphysical questions. Whilst theory testing works well for trying to establish the ontological status of an object, this is not always appropriate. In relation to *RePlay*, I wish to ask what it *does*, rather than what it *is*. Therefore a postpositivist approach, drawing on personal analysis and allowing for multiplicity of meaning is appropriate in this instance.

Paradigmatic Tensions

The way that I use both positivist and postpositivist methods mirrors a crucial tension at the heart of the project. Namely whether it is correct to claim that digital technology changes dance work ontology. Perhaps digital technology merely *reveals* characteristics of dance works that were already there. For example, the 'Kitchen' tool visualises the components that constitute the making and existence of *Bird Song* (2004). Does this mean that the work is now more than merely an abstract concept, made physical through performance? Or does this outcome demonstrate how the work already existed as more than a series of performances? Throughout the study I suggest both outcomes; that by exposing existential characteristics of dance works, digital technology changes how we access the work. Whilst I don't claim that the work's metaphysical structure is altered by technology, I do suggest that the revelation of certain features alters our relationship to the work, thus, following a descriptivist methodology, this raises questions about how we might think about the ontology of works.

In 'The Ontology of Art and Knowledge in Aesthetics' (2005), Thomasson outlines the 'discovery view', a paradigm which implies that;

the world contains a broad range of fully determinate, mind-independent facts about which everyone may be ignorant or in error, but (some of) which the scientist seeks to discover by substantive empirical investigations (Thomasson 2005: 2).

Reiterating the positivist leanings of philosophical enquiry, Thomasson suggests that this approach “generally serves as our paradigm of knowledge acquisition” (2005: 20). She points out that empirical knowledge can be gained about some types of things, suggesting for example it is possible to discover biological facts about a whale, which may show that previous beliefs about the nature of whales are incorrect (2005: 4-5). However Thomasson claims that this is not the case with art works.

Thomasson argues that because art works are intentional human constructs, as opposed to natural kinds they are classified in reference to the intentions of the maker, as opposed to their physical structure (Thomasson 2005: 8). Thomasson explains that in order for a term to be unambiguously applied to a work of art, the person grounding the term will already know that the thing they are referring to is an art-kind. She suggests that they will also have an existing conception of the ontological type of thing they are referring to; therefore a person’s use of a term suggests knowledge of both the identity and existence conditions of that thing (Thomasson 2005: 11). For example, we know the difference between an object such as a painting, and an event like a performance, and respond differently upon encountering each type of art-kind. This background knowledge does not imply that we all have in-depth ontological concepts in mind when we use terms or respond to works. However, it demonstrates that the nature of art works is constructed through existing knowledge and practices, which co-evolve and are co-dependent.

Following Thomasson’s framework, this research does not claim to make discoveries about the objective nature of dance, rather it makes suggestions about how our

spectatorial engagement with specific works is reconfigured through ‘choreographic objects’, thus raising questions about what the work is, and highlighting the relationship between social practices and ontology. An important point about Thomasson’s paper is that although she is arguing against a discovery model of knowledge, towards a more postpositivist paradigm, she maintains rigorous, logical theorising. This demonstrates the interplay between paradigms, and the way in which this methodological distinction is at the heart of philosophical debates concerning the nature of knowledge and existence.

Summary

This chapter outlined the way in which this thesis considers the question of digital technology’s ontological impact on dance. I have suggested some of the difficulties of examining the “space between binaries” (Kershaw and Nicholson 2011:2), and shown how ontological and epistemological debates echo the distinct views of positivist and postpositivist researchers. I have positioned this research within a postpositivist tradition and outlined the pragmatist framework, which tests philosophical theories through ‘dance world’ practices and examples. However, I acknowledge that deploying a philosophical approach to argument construction leans towards positivism, insomuch as it seeks to avoid allowing for problems to be resolved on a purely subjective basis.

I adopt an ontological standpoint that views the relationship between abstract and physical entities and the people who construct, use and refer to them as intrinsically

linked. This demonstrates how the subject of enquiry is interwoven with my methodology. Adopting this perspective means that this enquiry is central to shaping what these objects are. The reflexive relationship between philosophical enquiry and dance world practices means that through questioning and probing the nature of 'choreographic objects', their meaning, significance and ontology is co-constructed.

Methods such as case study analysis, theory testing and descriptive accounts, allow me to ground the potential abstraction of this enquiry in logic, practice and concrete examples. Using specific examples to test theoretical constructs enables me to think through abstract claims. Furthermore, exploring the use of various analytic and philosophical frameworks enables me to grasp the complexities of 'choreographic objects'. The next chapter starts to apply these methods, furthering the conversation started Chapter One about the notation and documentation of dance, by analysing discourse about dance scoring and using examples to test the ideas presented.

Chapter Four: What is a Dance Score?

Introduction

This chapter continues to explore some of the questions raised previously regarding dance scoring, asking specifically, what is a dance score, and how does it relate to the work it inscribes? I further articulate the traditional view outlined in Chapter One (pp.6-9), going on to propose three responses; firstly I suggest that the idea of ‘notationality’, central to Goodman and McFee’s perspectives is somewhat vague when applied to dance. Secondly, I argue that the stringent relationship between notation and scores proposed under Goodman’s view fails to account for the many roles and functions of scores in dance practice. Lastly, I suggest that the traditional view of notation, demonstrated in different ways by Goodman, McFee and Hutchinson Guest, is based on a flawed conception of dance’s relationship to writing. The chapter goes on to outline some of the ways that dance scores operate, and consider their relationship to movement and the abstract work. Finally, I propose an account of scoring that aims to be reflective of the breadth of dance scoring practices.

Revisiting the Traditional View

It is not only Goodman (1976), Hutchinson (1972) and McFee (1992) who advocate the potentials of notation for documenting dance. In a more recent article arts and technology scholar Natalie Lehoux suggests that, “[n]otation systems are essential to the description of movement” (2013: 154). She talks of the “problems” generated by the absence of a universally applied system (2013: 154). Considering this situation as

problematic underpins the traditional view, proponents of which firmly believe that the development of a universal notational system is both possible and necessary.

McFee articulates his position in 1992 through the proposal of a 'Thesis of Notationality' for dance, which suggests that,

performance A and performance B were performances of the same work of art (in any performing art) just in that case where both satisfied or instantiated some particular 'text' in a notation agreed by the knowledgeable in the art form to be an adequate notation for that form (McFee 1992: 97-98).

In 2011 McFee revises this thesis, suggesting that this formulation “requires too much” (2011: 62), by seeming to apply to all performing arts, and appearing to suggest that all dance works meet the same criteria (2011: 62). He acknowledges that the practical usefulness of this thesis is limited to those dance works that correspond to authoritative scores (2011: 62-63), and suggests that, “a more accurate formulation would apply notationality to particular artworks” (2011: 62). However, McFee maintains that the thesis offers insight, by making public the constraints of the type, so that,

authentic performances should be seen as constrained in line with it even when there are no actual scores (McFee 2011: 63).

In this sense, McFee's views echo Goodman's inasmuch as he sees notation as a way to help deal with the theoretical identity problems posed by dance works.

When Goodman initially articulated his views about the usefulness of notation in 1976 it sparked a debate among philosophers of dance (Bunker, Pakes and Rowell 2013: 4). Writing in 1978 Adina Armelagos and Mary Sirridge oppose Goodman's view. They argue that the specification of movements does not offer "adequate criterion" (1978: 129) for the identification of dance works. The primary issue that Armelagos and Sirridge have with Goodman's claim is that notation fails to account for style. Dance style is a relatively complex notion²¹ however, what is crucial here that Armelagos and Sirridge see is an essential property of any given dance work, yet not amenable to notation. They further argue that Goodman's view fails to acknowledge the practice of making dances, suggesting that,

[s]ometimes the choreographer does a great deal more than draw up a definitive plan of movement-and sometimes a good deal less (Armelagos and Sirridge 1987: 133).

They go on to argue that choreography does not produce the compliants required by Goodman, due to the way in which it does not merely involve the construction of a sequence of movement.

As explained in the Chapter Two (pp.27 - 29), under Goodman's view allographic art forms are notational (1976: 121). Armelagos and Sirridge concur with Goodman that dance tends towards the allographic, but suggest that Goodman's model is too tight

²¹ See Whatley (2005) for a detailed examination of the notion in relation to Siobhan Davies's work. See also Armelagos and Sirridge (1977, 1984).

and that dance is not *yet* clearly notatable (1978: 138), thus implying a belief in the potential of notation, should the practice be developed. They go on to suggest that,

[t]he fact that a need for notation is present and that notation is partially successful for known works in stable styles indicates that dance is much more likely to be an art form in transition to being allographic than an art form inherently autographic. It will become allographic only when either notation succeeds in capturing style, or general practice decides that style is incidental (Armelagos and Sirridge 1978: 138).

Interestingly this claim demonstrates how the authors take issue with Goodman's particular construal of notationality as opposed to the concept *per se*. They suggest that it is the failure of current notation systems to capture style that means Goodman's view is incorrect, rather than any fundamental disagreement with the idea that dance works can be notated.²²

What is Notation?

Notationality is a theoretical construct. Although there are important differences in their theses, McFee and Goodman similarly argue that dance works *could* be identified and therefore constrained in relation to notation, should such a tool exist. Therefore notationality is not disputed purely by the fact that there is no universal notational method for dance. However, I wish to argue that there are issues with the concept because the idea of 'notation' is somewhat vague. So, what is notation? As articulated in Chapter One (p.7) Goodman outlines five semantic and syntactic requirements for

²² Margolis (1981) argues contra Goodman (1976) and Armelagos and Sirridge (1978), suggesting that the centrality of the dancer to the dance means that dance can be considered autographic.

notational forms. According to Goodman notation differs from drawings, sketches and language, using abstract characters to stand for components. Each symbol can only stand for one component, meaning that notation resists the ambiguity associated with drawing and writing (1976: 127). This way of conceptualising notation suits some practices, such as western musical composition, yet in the case of dance there are only a few systems that meet Goodman's criteria. He points out that Labanotation passes the theoretical test for notation, as it allows for the essential features of a dance work to be recorded (1976: 127).

As previously discussed, McFee's Thesis of Notationality partially aligns with Goodman's view, however unlike Goodman, he has a relatively broad conception of what constitutes notation. His requirements are only that the system is agreed to be adequate by those knowledgeable in the form (McFee 1992: 97-98). He leaves open the question of which forms of inscription constitute notation, and which do not.

In 1992 McFee argues that notation is distinct from writing. However, in 2011 he acknowledges the breadth of ways that scores can be constructed. He uses the example of American choreographer Elaine Summers' *Instant Choice* (1962),²³ which,

used huge numbered styrofoam blocks, which had been carved into different shapes and painted in different colors on different surfaces, to cue movement for dancers (Banes 1983: 47).

McFee suggests that the rules in this dance functioned as an adequate

²³ This work was performed as part of *A Concert of Dance* at Judson Theatre in 1962 (see Banes 1983: 36-70).

score, “on the supposition that performance in accordance with them in this context results in a performance of that work” (McFee 2011: 55). He summarises his view by saying,

I tend to write primarily in terms of scores in systems of movement notation such as Labanotation, no doubt partly because I hope the long time spent mastering that system as not wasted! But these are by no means the only styles of score that could count here. The ideas of a *recipe* for a performance of that work nicely captures all that is required – and, in particular, the normativity that implies. (McFee 2011: 79)

Once again McFee refers Summers’ work here as an example of a dance work that has a non-notated score (2011: 55, 79). However, whilst McFee acknowledges that scores need not be composed via standardised notation, and highlights the potential of rules, he does not address explicitly whether under his view, rules spoken or written through language would also provide an adequate score.

There are two issues at play here, first what makes a mode of inscription ‘notation’, in particular whether this must be a) sharable and b) distinct from language, and second whether dance scores must be composed via ‘notation’. It seems that McFee has a broad conception of how scores might be inscribed, but seems to draw a distinction between codified movement notation systems, which have been developed to provide sharable methods for analysing movement, and other forms of scores, in the form of rules and so forth.

Hutchinson Guest, explicitly articulates her view regarding the inadequacies of language for capturing movement. She suggests that, “the range of interpretation and

leeway for misunderstanding” makes language inefficient for effective notation (in D’Amato, 2014: 53). Equally Lehoux, in her comparison of various notational methods, advocates the use of abstract symbols, such as those used in Labanotation (2013: 159).

In the Introduction to *A Choreographer’s Score* (2012), Cvejić suggests that the lack of a universal notation system is not a problem at all, suggesting that it “is more an advantage than a misfortune, paving the way for singularity” (2012: 9). Indeed each choreographer may choose a unique method or combination of methods to document and share his/her work. As previously mentioned, choreographers, dancers and scholars inscribe dance movement in a wide variety of ways, including sketches, diagrams and linguistic accounts. These inscriptions frequently come to be referred to as ‘scores’. If we are to agree with Goodman’s view that a score must be notational, a broader conception of notation is required. Alternatively it seems that scores may be developed through non-notational inscriptions. The second option seems the most logical, however the question remains as to which inscriptions might count as forms of notation. The distinction from language suggests that in order to be understood it must follow sharable conventions or codes. So, is perhaps codification, construed as a system following sharable rules, a necessary and sufficient condition for notation?

The word ‘notation’ is listed in the Oxford English Dictionary (online) as, “[a] system of written symbols used to represent numbers, amounts or elements in a field such as music or mathematics” (Oxford English Dictionary 2008: 977). This description clearly encompasses those forms of codified notation that meet Goodman’s requirements. The central point is that in order to be codified — and therefore notation at all in

Goodman's terms — each symbol must be a sign in the semiotic sense, meaning that it stands for something else. Whilst some notational systems, such as Labanotation bear no visual resemblance to the work, others such as Benesh use stick figures to represent movement. Following semiotician Charles Peirce, Labanotation scores use a form of sign referred to as "symbols" (2001: 10). This means that they refer to the object of the body through analogy, rather than through resemblance, or by associative connection. However, Benesh notation, includes "icons" (Peirce 2001: 10), which are signs that refer to the subject they represent via resemblance.

.Language uses symbols, meaning that the definition does very little to shed light on what may constitute notation, and how this differs from abstract sketches and written or spoken words.. Moreover, idiosyncratic inscriptions also use symbols to stand for components in order to represent relations and so on. This is demonstrated in the image below, taken from British choreographer Rosemary Butcher's notebook. According to Burrows, this image shows "preparatory time and space drawings for her 1999 piece *scan*" (in Burrows and Van Imschoot 2005).

This item has been removed due to 3rd Party Copyright. The unabridged version of the thesis can be found in the Lancaster Library, Coventry University.

Figure 1: Sketches from Butcher's notebook (Van Imschoot and Engels 2011)

This example raises questions about codification; can these drawings be 'de-coded' by a knowledgeable reader? If so, they are sharable and their significance is not the sole reserve of the author. The issue seems to be that whilst non-knowledgeable readers might make educated guesses regarding what these signs stand for, there is no standardised code to ensure that we all reach the same conclusion. The signified component for each sign has no sharable properties. It is therefore tempting to draw a tidy distinction between standardised modes of dance notation, such as Benesh and Labanotation, and idiosyncratic inscriptions, and suggest, following Goodman that the latter do not constitute a notational form, due to their non-codified nature. However, this does not seem quite right, as Labanotation is also only accessible to those knowledgeable in the code. It may help here to reconsider McFee's thesis, under which notations must be agreed upon by people knowledgeable in the form (2011: 71). McFee seems to be suggesting that standardisation is desired for notation. This raises an important difference between Butcher's score and Labanotation, which is not

intended as a standard system, rather it is composed in what Burrows refers to as a “private code” (in Burrows and Van Imschoot 2005). So, can this form of code be considered notational?

If we are to answer positively the potential for private notations becomes apparent, thus juxtaposing the central concern of standardised systems, which aim to make movement properties *sharable*. However, there is no obvious reason why drawings such as Butcher’s cannot be considered notational, providing they reveal features of the work to a knowledgeable reader. The fact that we cannot all decode them — a situation that is equally true of Labanotation — is merely a consequence of our being unaware of Butcher’s code. Furthermore, if we are to think of notation in alignment with its dictionary definition, which makes no explicit mention of sharability, despite being non-codified, such ‘private’ inscriptions can be conceptualised as notation.

In light of Cvejić’s suggestion about the important and regular role of idiosyncrasy, it is perhaps possible to soften McFee’s view and propose that a text may be notational if agreed upon by those who are able to read a specific choreographer’s language of inscription. However, the role of standardisation and intended use of the notation is important. Burrows draws an important distinction between two forms of notation, suggesting that,

[n]otation divides into two kinds: the various attempts at a complete system to write down work that already exists; or the score as a notebook, a tool to find something new (Burrows in Burrows and Van Imschoot 2005).

Butcher's drawings are demonstrative of the second form of notation as they both arise from and inform the creative process.

So it seems as though there is no clear reason why we must conflate notation and codification. However, suggesting that all inscriptions are notation rubs up against common practice. We tend to draw distinctions between codified, sketched and linguistic ways of communicating. Furthermore Burrows' distinction between those forms that aim towards a complete system and those that serve a different function is important. McFee and Goodman certainly seem to conceptualise notation as a non-idiosyncratic mode of inscription that has the potential to be standardised.

Work and Score

McFee suggests that dance scores are created before, during, or after the work and therefore are intended as either records or 'recipes' (McFee 2011: 52 - 69), although he points out that scores created as a record can also be used as a recipe to re-instantiate the work. The distinction between description and prescription is important in matters of ontology. For example, if a dance was choreographed through the writing of a score, the score can be said to be an intrinsic part of the work, as it was essential to its creation. A descriptive score on the other hand has a different relationship to the work and serves primarily as a record and/or a tool for re-instantiation. Whilst it is theoretically possible to compose a dance by writing a Labanotation score, this is unusual. Such scores are usually created alongside the work, or after it has been completed. They are composed by a trained professional, usually someone other than

the choreographer and therefore a degree of interpretation is involved. Although the notator may be present during the creative process, the central aim of Labanotation, for example, is to record the finished work. Therefore the relationship between the score and the original instance of the work is not a reflexive one, the work can be 'finished' and performed prior to the existence of a score.

This gives a Labanotation score a different status to a musical score or the script of a play, both of which traditionally serve as instructions for the first performance. The process of writing is often an important part of the playwright or composer's creative process, meaning that the score plays an essential role in the development of the work. The situation in dance is different; it is conceptualised as 'externality' by Pouillaude (n.d.: 5), who stresses the third-party role of the notator. He suggests that,

[t]he space of choreographic notation has a surprisingly triangular structure, involving as it does three parties: the choreographer who demonstrates and proposes, the dancer who makes visible, and the notator who inscribes (n.d. : 2).

Whilst Pouillaude accurately describes some modes of making and inscribing, this description does not fully reflect the wealth of approaches to making and writing dance. Firstly, some choreographers and dancers are trained notators. Secondly, and significantly, many choreographers make dances with and on their own bodies. Finally, this triangular structure only applies to standardised notational forms, which require specialist training. As previously demonstrated, many dances are inscribed by the choreographer or dancers through idiosyncratic sketches, written notes and drawings, which would not meet Goodman's notational requirements, but nevertheless often

come to be referred to as scores.

Due perhaps to the emphasis on standardised systems, such as Labanotation in philosophical literature, there is a tendency to suggest that writing is inessential to dance making. Under the traditional view, writing plays no part in the making of the work.

Pouillaude suggests,

[i]n fact, unlike music and contrary to the meaning of the very terms “choreography”, dance-making practice has always remained dissociable from the activities of writing and reading. Thus, today’s “choreographer” is not someone who *writes*, but rather someone who invents, demonstrates and composes (n.d: 1).

This is a view shared by Carr, who, as mentioned in the Chapter Two (p.26) claims that “[c]horeography just is the making of dances (not the mere ‘writing’ of them)” (1987: 352). These are controversial suggestions. The role of writing in dance making is well established and well theorised.²⁴ Despite the fact that systems such as Labanotation do not have a reflexive role in the process of dance making, choreography is often created on, or in collaboration with the page. As Pouillaude mentions, the word ‘choreography’ is associated with writing. It derives from the Greek words ‘*khoreia*,’ meaning ‘dance,’ and ‘*graphein*,’ meaning ‘to write.’ Dance has a long tradition of being planned, composed, and written prior to being embodied, and this practice goes

²⁴ See Brandstetter (2011), Foster (1996) and Lepecki (2004b), amongst others. A joint conference between Congress On Research in Dance and Society of Dance History Scholars (2014), titled *Writing Dancing/Dancing Writing* addressed this theme.

as far back as the seventeenth century, when some of the first ballets were choreographed at a desk (Laurenti 1984).

deLahunta describes the central role that the choreographer's notebook often plays.

He suggests that choreographers,

employ the page as a toolkit for self-reflection/examination, for the collective documenting and sharing of creative ideas, scripts and scores, capturing the dynamics of gesture and recording notes for future reference (deLahunta 2004: 67).

Such processes are demonstrated by the excerpt from Butcher's journal shown above and in Burrows' articulations about the second form of notation. It is of course possible to argue that these activities are secondary to the making of the dance, and that just because writing occurs alongside the dance making it is not essential to it. However, some scholars and practitioners disagree with this (Brannigan 2014, Longley 2009). For example deLahunta suggests, "the page becomes an interactive object, inextricably linked with the processes of dance making" (2004: 67). This suggestion is demonstrated through the writing of Judson choreographer Anna Halprin, who suggests,

scores can be used to serve many purposes. One is a process for integrating personal growth and artistic expression. Scores can become a way of externalizing hidden feelings, attitudes and blocks (Halprin 2012: 211).

This statement implies that hidden feelings can limit creativity, but that scores can help to bring such resources to the surface (2012: 211), thus demonstrating the central role of the score to Halprin's artistic process.

Given that we accept scores that are composed through a range of inscriptions and can see that writing plays an important role in dance making, some clarification regarding the distinction between notes made in rehearsal and performance scores is needed. Burrows suggests that,

[o]ften these notes are a private reference point for the choreographer, but occasionally they become a hieroglyphic that the dancer must translate directly (Burrows in Burrows and Van Imschoot 2005).

Perhaps this marks the shift from private note to movement score. Burrows' articulation importantly allows for inscriptions to change roles, without recourse to the artist or author's intention. For example, a choreographic sketch might be translated by a future dancer or dance maker; thus making a transition from sketch to score. Van Imschoot suggests that,

[c]ontrary to the music tradition, dance practice has never strictly reserved the word "score" for a specific object, encoded in notation on a piece of paper, indicating a body of work that can then be instantiated with great rigor in performance (Van Imschoot 2010).

This articulation proposes a stark challenge to the strict requirements of the traditional view. Van Imschoot's suggestions arise from comprehensive research with dance practitioners, and are therefore reflective of contemporary dance making. She focuses

on how scores *actually* function, as opposed to how they *theoretically* could. Van Imschoot goes on to suggest some unifying features of dance scores, describing them as “heteronomous working tools, whose use is ad hoc, local and mostly in tandem with verbally or physically communicated agreements” (2010). Although this provides a loose framework for understanding non-standardised scores, more specific investigation of the ways that scores relate to works is required to fully understand their roles.

Work-Determinate Scores

As demonstrated previously (pp. 6 – 10), one of the key tensions in the philosophical discourse regarding standardised dance notations regards their ability to adequately determine the work, or, to put it another way, to capture all of its essential features. This issue is not exclusive to standardised notations. Linguistic and idiosyncratic scores equally constrain and determine the work, to a greater or lesser degree.

An example of a non-standardised approach that aims at full work-determination is *Hypothetical Stream* (1997), choreographed by Forsythe for French choreographer Daniel Larrieu. Forsythe wrote the score for the work and sent it to Larrieu via fax machine (Van Imschoot 2010). This case demonstrates the potential centrality of writing in dance making, and provides an example of a case whereby the score was a prescriptive ‘recipe’ for the initial performance of the work. However, it is a marginal case, this method is not common practice. The context and parameters of the artistic exchange meant that the work must be fully determined through the score. Forsythe

explains how he generated a series of sketches, which resembled knots that the dancers needed to solve or unknot (2003a). He went on to stage the work multiple times and it was different each time (Forsythe 2003a), thus demonstrating the open nature of the work, despite the centrality of the score. Importantly, the score was accompanied by a letter from Forsythe to Larrieu featuring instructions for reading the score²⁵ (Forsythe 2011). The letter was initially composed as distinct from the score itself, yet, it became conflated with the other aspects of Forsythe's instructions in order for the work to be performed. This demonstrates my previous claim that objects, such as Forsythe's letter, do not have to be composed as scores to function as such, or else implies that the score itself was not capable of fully determining the work, as it relied upon extra instruction from Forsythe in order to be instanced.

Of course it is important to remember that fully determining the work is not always a motivation for the development of scores. As Halprin's observations demonstrate, some choreographers use them as creative tools. However, it is not enough to suggest that the relationship between the score and the work is solely based on the intentions of the choreographer. This is demonstrated through examples where the role of the score has shifted, as is the case with Allan Kaprow's work *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* (1959). Kaprow developed the work by writing a detailed score, consisting of diagrams, sketches, and lists of instruction (Lepecki 2012). *18 Happenings* was not initially created to be a dance; it was a performative event that took place on 4th October

²⁵ This can be seen in *What's the Score? Publication on Scores and Notation in Dance* (Van Imschoot and Engels 2011)

http://sarma.be/oralsite/pages/William_Forsythe_on_Scores/

1959 at the Rueben Gallery in New York. Art critic Jeff Kelley describes coloured lights, recorded sounds, odours, speech, and routine-like actions (Kelley 2012: 22)

The event did not fit neatly into any existing category for the performing or visual arts. According to Kelley, it became the first 'happening' and came to mark the subsequent development of a new class of performance (Kelley, 2012: 22). The work was first re-staged in 2006 by Lepecki, at Munich's Haus de Kunst. In 2010 Butcher also re-staged *18 Happenings* at the Haywood Gallery in London. Significantly, these re-stagings, and subsequent accounts of the process, reveal the centrality of the score to the work.

Lepecki explains that Kaprow created multiple scores, as well as over 400 pages of notes and instructions (2012), implying a distinction between the score and the notes. Lepecki suggests that he was initially reluctant to undertake the project due to the perceived singularity of happenings; however, consulting Kaprow's detailed score encouraged him to take on the project (2012). Kaprow was not involved in the re-staging process, therefore the implication is that the material itself gave Lepecki enough information for him to be confident that the work was determined through the score and notes. Indeed the re-staging was presented as an instance of Kaprow's work, as opposed to a new version, implying that access to the score provided adequate information to authentically instance the work (Lepecki 2012).

Indeterminate Scores

Both of the scores discussed above adopt a combination of writing and sketches, demonstrating that the ambiguity associated with language may not in fact limit the potential to fully determine dance works. However, some choreographers utilise the potential vagueness of language in order to develop scores that are consciously non-determinate and ambiguous. Dance scholar Alison D'Amato discusses 'indeterminate language scores' (2014), she writes,

[t]he creator of an indeterminate score intentionally bends notation towards unpredictability, putting forward signifiers that effectively correspond to a multiplicity of corporeal signifieds (D'Amato 2014: 53).

Discussing examples from artists Jackson Mac Low, Deborah Hay and Yvonne Meier, D'Amato explores the practice of working with deliberately ambiguous scores. She suggests that such scores are generative, as opposed to functioning solely as a representational document (2014: 53).

Improvisational practices also often use consciously ambiguous or polysemic scores inscribed through language and sketches to encourage the generation of new, or at least non-prescribed movement. David Koteen and Nancy Stark Smith (2008) provide a

detailed account of the principles and history of contact improvisation (CI). CI involves spontaneous movement between two or more people. Stark Smith describes it as,

a duet form based on the dialogue of weight, balance, reflect, and impulse between two moving bodies that are in physical contact (in Koteen and Stark Smith 2008, xi).

CI was initially developed in the USA in the early 1970s by Steve Paxton, who was also a key figure in the Judson Dance Theatre (Koteen and Stark Smith 2008: xi). Stark Smith was also central to the development of the form. She worked closely with Paxton, and practiced and taught CI around the world (Koteen and Stark Smith 2008: xi)

Improvisational scores are particularly interesting partially due to the way in which they may be non-physical, verbal entities. Improvisation classes for example, might involve the teacher leading the students through a series of loose directives in order to encourage spontaneous movement. Such scores may or may not be written down and circulated more widely. They may be repeated, or as transient as the improvised movement itself, preserved only in the memories of the teacher and dancer. Van Imschoot refers to dance practitioner Lisa Nelson's 'Tuning Scores', suggesting that they do not refer to a written score, but a set of "shared agreements and tools" (Van Imschoot 2010). She includes Nelson's articulation that the scores cultivate a "communication and feedback system" (Nelson in Van Imschoot 2010). This form of score is used fairly regularly in improvisational contexts where the dancers will agree upon, or are offered a set of parameters or behaviours in order to instigate movement.

In these cases the score does not inscribe a specific work of dance art, therefore, I suggest such scores are action instigating, as opposed to work indicating.

Stark Smith has inscribed her improvisational score, which she titles the 'Underscore' through language and symbols in order to share it with the wider community. The Underscore consists of 40 stimuli that guide the user through the practice of CI. It begins with the directive 'Arriving Energetically', which is described as,

[b]ringing your attention, your presence, your will, into the room. Bringing your focus into the present situation. Arriving at the present moment" (Koteen and Stark Smith 2008: 91).

This is followed by 'Arriving Physically' and 'Pow-Wow', which involves checking in with the other dancers, and 'Preambulation'. Stark Smith goes on to encourage the transition between various energetic states through directions that describe ideas and the description of principles as opposed to specific movements. Each point has a name and is accompanied by a symbol, which is designed to appear hand-drawn on the printed page. For example, as demonstrated in the image below, two arrows meeting one another indicates 'Attraction', described as,

[s]ensing a pull *toward* something or someone — another dancer's movement quality, presence, body mass; the music; a patch of sunlight on the floor. Feeling a magnetic pull to touch, move with, move toward (Koteen and Stark Smith 2008: 93).

These instructions encourage a way of thinking about the body in space. It may seem curious to prescribe feelings. However, consideration of how the score came into being is helpful for understanding the nature of the directions.

Stark Smith explains that in 1990, after almost two decades of practicing and teaching CI the Underscore came to her.

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She explains that she had become “claustrophobic” with having to follow her own syllabus (in Koteen and Stark Smith 2008: 90). In response to this she found herself prolonging the open and less structured sections of classes, during which

she would use language and her own movement to suggest to the students

Figure 2: Section of the Underscore (Koteen and Stark Smith 2008: 93)

particular ideas to think about in order to generate their own movement.

Stark Smith describes how her classes shifted emphasis and how they were,

now consisting of a changing proportion of this open “talked” space and a few specifically focussed activities/exercises occurring in a seemingly random, intuitively determined order” (Stark Smith in Koteen and Stark Smith 2008: 90).

Stark Smith’s students however started to notice that the class occurred in sections, despite the apparently random nature of the approach.

Stark Smith explains,

[a]nd then it dawned on me that underneath what I was experiencing as a random selection of materials was a very consistent score operating all the time, informing my choices. What was this inner, under score? (Stark Smith in Koteen and Stark Smith 2008: 90).

Understanding how the score arose from Stark Smith's experiences helps us to see how the directions as descriptive as well as prescriptive. Stark Smith articulates what she feels happening at each stage of the process, making suggestions about where the dancer might focus their attention. The description of her feelings, such as the "magnetic pull" (Koteen and Stark Smith 2008: 93), referred to above, serves as a stimulus for the dancer.

Although Stark Smith went through the process of articulating the score through writing and drawing, the score itself arose from the practice of teaching. So, how does this relate to movement notations systems, such as Labanotation? There are obvious differences. For instance, the Underscore includes 'icons', which refer to the directions via analogy, as opposed to the abstract 'symbols' used in Labanotation. However, whilst they have relatively clear meanings, this is largely to due to their relationship to written instructions. The icon for 'Attraction' clearly illustrates the notion, as do the others shown in Figure 2. However, readers are unlikely to comprehend the directive without written or spoken explanation. Stark Smith's score is primarily inscribed through written language, perhaps fully or partially spoken during instantiation. Furthermore, Labanotation focuses on the specific movements of body parts in time

and space. It aims for detailed and accurate description of the components of the body. This is in clear contrast to Stark Smith's score, which is consciously polysemic. Another interesting distinction involves the relationship to the work. When the Underscore is activated it is the score that is performed as opposed to a work that is captured through a score.

Setting aside for the moment the nature of the inscriptions themselves, there are, however some similarities between Stark Smith's score and a Labanotation score. For example, they share a subject position inasmuch as they both articulate the behaviour of the dancer, as opposed to documenting an external visual image. In both instances the movement is generated before the score, which arises as a documentation of the practice, rehearsal or performance. Both are intended to provide the stimulus for future movement. But are there enough commonalities to claim they are the same type of thing, as opposed to two distinct objects that happen to share a name?

In order to move towards answering this questions we should think about their respective relationships to the work. The claim that Labanotation captures the work (Hutchinson 1972, McFee, 1992), conceives of the work as a repeatable structure of movement. As previously mentioned, in most cases the work is not composed through the production of the score. It therefore exists independently from the notation, which is a document and a tool that can be used to instantiate the relevant structure of movement. Under the traditional view, whilst notation can be seen as essential to the instantiation of a specific version of the work, it is not generally considered to be intrinsic to the work *per se*. The work and score are undoubtedly linked, but are not

co-existent. The reflexive role of writing in dance practice problematises this perspective and may occur in instances where the score is essential to the work, nevertheless in both cases, the score articulates a dance work, or aspects of it.

The Underscore, on the other hand arises from and describes Stark Smith's work (as a verb), but does not articulate *a* dance work (as a noun). Performing the Underscore activates the score itself. This contrasts with other forms of score, which serve to instance a work, thus developing a conceptual separation between the score and the resulting movement. The Underscore is identifiable as Stark Smith's work, meaning that it is this specific entity that is instanced, as opposed to CI more generally. The result of this is that elements of Stark Smith's work are stabilised and repeated, even if the resulting movement is different every time. Here we can start to see the complexities of the notion of the work in some areas of dance practice. The term is used to refer to the practice of improvisation as well as a more conventional artwork. However the interplay between practice and performance, and the scoring of both results in a conflation between the work of dance and the dance work, as both noun and verb are scored and performed.

Summary

Dance scores exist in a wide variety of ways. They might be composed in any combination of standard, sketched or linguistic inscription. They might be physically presented and preserved, or exist only as a speech act or idea. Furthermore, each type of score has a relationship to a work or set of actions, which will determine the

behaviour of the dancers to a greater or lesser degree. So where does this take us? This chapter has acknowledged the breadth of the term 'score' in dance discourse and practice and outlined some of the ways that scores are inscribed and used. The differences are clear, however, questions remains as to the similarities between each approach. If we are to find meaning in the term it seems important to think through what it is that unifies these wide-ranging approaches. My primary observation has to do with each score's intrinsic relationship to action. Whether intended to document as a means for re-instantiation, or to generate new movement possibilities, each score offers the potential for movement, in a broad sense of the term.

Despite the wide usage of the term 'score' there seems to be a consensus amongst both philosophical aestheticians and those working in Dance Studies and Performance Studies, such as Birringer (2013), D'Amato (2014) and Van Imschoot (2010) that scores have a direct relationship to practice. In McFee's terms they are seen to operate either as a record, a 'recipe' or both (2011: 52 – 69), a sentiment echoed, albeit in alternative terms, by Van Imschoot's observation that scores instigate praxis (2010). It seems fair to suggest, therefore, that although the way that the term is used is very broad, it generally refers to a set of instructions or parameters - that may or may not be written down - which documents or underlies a specific work or practice. The three case studies considered in this research extend and challenge this conception of scoring, as they do not focus on instructing an instance of a work, but on analysing and transmitting the choreographic structures and process, though digital, or partially digital means. The next chapter builds on this discussion of dance scores by

considering the nature of recordings, which are central to all three case studies, asking how they relate to the abstract work and individual live performances.

Chapter Five: Instantiating Dance on the Screen ²⁶

Introduction

One of the questions raised by thinking about dance scores that has not yet been addressed is whether one can access the work through reading the score. Whilst it is feasible to argue that it is possible to access a dance work through reading a notated score, perhaps through visualising the movement of the dancers,²⁷ for example, this, however, seems a little far-fetched. The case of recordings, on the other hand is more complex as they visually present the work in performance. Furthermore, recordings play a central role in 'choreographic objects', therefore some consideration of their relationship to the work and the performance event is important. The way that dance is not standardly made through the construction of a score, means that some claim that it is particularly ephemeral,²⁸ reliant on the presence and action of a human body to be adequately experienced (Carr 1987, McFee 2011).²⁹ In light of our increased access to dance in digital form, however, this poses interesting questions such as: What are we watching when we view dance on screen? And what does it mean to truly encounter a work of dance art?

As a response to these questions, this chapter proposes three challenges to the view that dance works are only accessible through live performance. First, I suggest that

²⁶ A shorter version of this chapter is published in the *American Society of Aesthetics Graduate E-Journal*. See Blades (2014)

²⁷ For example, dance scholar and notator Victoria Watts (2010) discusses the desire to be able to visualise dance from the notation.

²⁸ McFee (1992, 2011)

²⁹ See also Phelan (1993) and Sparshott (1995)

viewing dance through recordings and screenings allows the viewer to gain knowledge of the work and appreciate its features. Second, extending an analogy with sports matches introduced by Stephen Davies (2001) and McFee (2011), I suggest that the experience of dance works follows a hierarchical structure. Lastly, I discuss the way in which recent developments in dance practice and discourse decentralise the body in both material and digital contexts. Following Thomasson (2005), this study adopts an ontological perspective that suggests that because art works are the products of human endeavour, they are intrinsically linked to social practices (2005: 8), therefore, I claim that our ontological investigation of dance should be reflective of evolving practices for viewing the form.

Accessing Dance

Dance is digitally transmitted and documented in various ways. Conventional performances may be recorded or screened online, on TV, projected on to cinema screens, or temporary 'theatres' in public spaces. For example, The Royal Opera House in London runs a series of screenings in public locations around the UK.³⁰ Such events may or may not be recorded and archived. Furthermore, recordings may be shared as excerpts or full-length films, which may or may not be edited. They are used for artistic, educational, promotional and entertainment purposes. They may be embedded with digital scores or annotated by students, audiences and scholars.³¹

³⁰ See <http://www.roh.org.uk/about/bp-big-screens>

³¹ For examples of three digital scores see Motion Bank <http://motionbank.org>

Screenings and recordings are the main focus here. However it is important to refer to two related examples. First, specially made dance films are increasingly common. Such films may or may not arise from conventional performance works. Either way, the film is developed on set or location, with no 'audience' other than the cast and crew. The second, somewhat rarer example is performances that *only* happen online, such as Bel's *Shirtology* (1997), performed as part of Tate's 'Performance Room' series in 2012. Such instances are akin to live screenings, but the fact that there is no audience in the same space as the performance sets them apart, meaning that they fall somewhere in between dance films and screened performances. Each of these examples may be considered 'live', albeit in different ways. Furthermore, each has a unique relationship to the notion of a 'performance' and to the abstract work. However, related questions are posed by each example, such as: What type of thing are we watching? And what does it mean for dance to be 'accessed' and 'performed'?

As mentioned in Chapter Two (p.31) the type/token schema is often used by dance philosophers in order to articulate the relationship between the abstract work and the physical performance.³² Under this schema each dance work is considered an abstract 'type', made present through the physical 'token' of the performance. The conventional view, advocated by Carr (1987) and McFee (1992, 2011), suggests that only a live performance counts as a token or instance of the work. The problem with this view is that it rules out works that are not shared solely via live performances, and it does not reflect the ways we commonly talk about our experiences of dance.

³² McFee (1992, 2011), Pakes (2013) and Sparshott (1995) each adopt this way of conceptualising dance works.

As discussed in Chapter Three (p.73), McFee suggests that it is incorrect to claim expertise of a work one has only viewed via a recording. He highlights a “profound difference” (McFee 2011: 113) between dance works and musical works in this regard, proposing that,

[p]erhaps a person who has listened to all of Mozart’s compositions on DVD has heard all of Mozart’s music; but someone who has never seen actual bodies in motion (rather than merely the recording of them) does not, in the same way, even *arguably* seem to have seen all of Christopher Bruce’s dances; or even *any* of them (McFee 2011: 113).

Here McFee claims that in order to access dance one must have experienced live bodies in motion. It is not entirely clear whether he means that one must have seen Bruce’s dancers performing Bruce’s movement, or merely have a background knowledge of dance in live form. However, either way, his view posits a central role to the dancer’s body. McFee goes on to claim that,

if right, this seems to imply that a person who has seen only those recordings had not seen any *dance* at all (McFee 2011: 113).

Although McFee acknowledges that it is an extreme position, he maintains that we cannot seriously regard such a person to be an expert in Bruce’s work. However, this claim is not reflected in practice. Dance scholars and audiences frequently claim, and accept claims of, expertise about works that they have not seen live. If expertise were dependent upon live performance, there would be no contemporary or future experts of 19th Century dance pioneer Loie Fuller’s work, for example. Indeed dance

scholarship in general would be significantly diminished. While one might wish to argue that there is not enough primary evidence to claim expertise of historical dances, this is not reflective of the practices of the dance world, which is generally accepting of such claims.

The question of whether we have truly seen a work closely relates to issues of knowledge and appreciation. McFee acknowledges that watching a recording provides knowledge of the work, pointing out that repeatability allows for in-depth consideration of certain properties (2011: 112). It is therefore possible to argue that repeated viewing might allow for *fuller* knowledge and/or appreciation of the work than a live performance. However, while attending a live performance is likely to enhance appreciation, equally audience members of a live performance may find their appreciation enhanced through the repeated watching of a recording. An ideal situation would arguably include both forms of viewing. However, the key point here is that recordings alone can provide knowledge and inform appreciation, which are therefore not essentially linked to live performance.

It seems strongly counter-intuitive to claim that one can be an expert about a work that one has not seen. In the case of art, epistemology and ontology are related modes of enquiry. Thomasson argues that the type of knowledge we are able to gain about art ontology is different to the empirical knowledge that we might acquire about natural kinds. This is because in order to disambiguate art works we must have an existing understanding of the concept of the type of object we are faced with, thus demonstrating an intrinsic link between social practice and ontology (Thomasson

2005). Although offering a slightly different perspective, Davies agrees with Thomasson that ontological enquiry must work in accordance with common practices. He calls for the deployment of a “pragmatic constraint” (PC), suggesting that we must constrain ontological proposals in accordance with common practices (2009: 126). Van Camp (2006) also endorses the adoption of a pragmatist framework in issues of art work identity, suggesting that,

the identity of works of art work can be understood pragmatically as ways of talking and acting by the community of the art world (Van Camp 2006: 52).

Following these perspectives it appears that in cases where we develop expertise through recordings and screenings, and therefore claim to have seen the work, we should logically allow for digital instances of dance works. However, it is not the case that *all* forms of digital representations count as an instance. Watching a highly edited trailer of Siobhan Davies’ *White Man Sleeps* (1988), for example, arguably does not constitute a full experience of the work and fails to provide adequate access to the work’s properties for claims of expertise to be made. This begs the question; what constitutes a digital instance?

In order to answer this question we must determine what is meant by an ‘instance’ of a work. Davies (2010) suggests that,

[a]n instance of a work is something that makes manifest to receivers certain properties that bear experientially upon the appreciation of the work (Davies 2010: 412).

This account raises the question of what these properties are. If one considers the physical presence of dancers as an essential property of the work, recordings and screenings would fail to constitute instances of the work. However, it is possible to argue that this property is non-essential. Furthermore, recordings arguably have the potential to possess all of the other manifest properties of the work, and are able to bear experientially upon appreciation.

Davies suggests that there are two forms of instance at play in ontological discourse. He distinguishes between a work's "proveniential instances" (P-instances) and its "purely epistemic instances" (E-instances) (2010: 411). Davies' description of a work's P-instance smoothly applies to performance,

[a] work's P-instances are the logically first products of the artist's generative activity that possess the kinds of manifest properties required in entities that are to 'bear experientially' on the appreciation of the work (Davies 2010: 414).

Davies draws a distinction between P-singular art forms such as painting, in which cases there is one P-instance of the work, and forms such as music (and dance), which can have multiple P-instances. In the case of dance, for example, the premiere of a work is not prioritised over subsequent performances meaning that the 'first product of the artists' generative activity' can have multiple, equal manifestations. However, the 'history of production' to borrow Goodman's term (1976: 122) does inform the status of the P-instance, which arises directly from the artist's actions.

An E-instance, on the other hand, possesses the manifest properties of the work, regardless of how it comes to do so. Davies suggests that,

[a]n instance of a work in general, as we have seen, is something that makes manifest to receivers certain properties that bear experientially upon the appreciation of the work. An instance in what I am terming the *purely epistemic* sense *fully* justifies this requirement, and does so simply in virtue of the manifest properties that it possesses, independently of how it came to have these properties (Davies 2010: 415).

The issue here remains as to whether the physical presence of a dancer is an essential property for the appreciation of the work. Given the widespread use of recordings for reconstruction, analysis and appreciation,³³ it is worth taking seriously the idea that the physical presence of a dancer need not bear essentially upon the appreciation of the work. Therefore, we might want to suggest that the notion of a work's E-instance may help to explain how it is that we can gain knowledge of a work through a recording. Given that recordings and screenings aid in the appreciation of works, it is possible to suggest that they might count as E-instances by offering epistemological access to the work, whilst not claiming to be exactly the same type of thing as a live performance, or P-instance. Davies suggests that,

[i]t is possible for a performable work to have E-instances that are not performances because an event can play the relevant role in appreciation without standing in the relevant causal-intentional relation to the composition of the work (Davies 2010: 421).

³³ See Thomas (2003) for a discussion into the role of recordings in dance reconstruction.

However, this outcome does not appropriately consider the role of the choreographer. Many recordings are made by, or under the direction of the choreographer, so they are not removed from the provenance of the work in the way that an E-instance implies. Furthermore, even if we are to accept recordings as E-instances the question remains as to which digital objects or events possess the correct properties to constitute E-instances. McFee points out that there need not be an exceptionless answer to the issue of accessing the work (2011: 115). It seems tempting to consider the problem on a case-by-case basis, however this is not entirely satisfactory. Intuitively it seems that the relationship between work, performance and recording cannot be unique for each dance work, meaning that a case-by-case outcome might fail to provide adequate insight into the general issue. A possible strategy is to refer to the intended format of the work. For example, if Siobhan Davies intended *White Man Sleeps* to be experienced live, it is possible to argue that it is inaccessible through recording. However, a comparison with music reveals that it is not quite that simple. It is impossible that Mozart intended for his compositions to be experienced through recording, however theory and practice allow for us to encounter his works in this format. In addition, the intentions of the choreographer are not always clear or accessible,³⁴ and so relying solely on this approach leaves too much room for speculation. The notion of E-instances might bring us closer to determining which digital objects allow access to the work as it foregrounds the requirement that they must comprise the relevant properties, thus arguably

³⁴ This issue is discussed by Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946), who suggest that the author's intention has no significance to the meaning of a text.

eliminating edited or partial recordings, however, the question of what these relevant properties are remains open.

Understanding Experiences

In order to establish which examples constitute ‘tokens’ or instances of the work we should turn our attention to the way we describe our experiences. Accessing music via transmissions and recordings is a widely accepted state of affairs.³⁵ It is possible to argue that the situation in music is different due to ontological distinctions between music and dance. Fully disputing this view would involve entering into the discussion regarding platonist types,³⁶ and I am not sure that this will reveal much about the issue at stake here. Instead, I suggest that philosophical discourse allows for digital instances of musical but not dance works because this is our primary mode of experiencing music and is therefore a legitimate medium for developing both musical practices and academic discourses thereupon. In the past, the primary mode of accessing dance has been via live performance, however the situation is changing. A report published in 2010 by the Arts Council of England concluded that over the half of the online population use the internet to not only to retrieve information about art and culture, but also to engage with audio-visual content. This is significantly more common among the 16–34 age group than any other, signifying a generational shift. While music is the most frequently sought art form, 30% of the 341 respondents reported watching dance online (ACE 2010: 18), making dance the second most

³⁵ See Davies (2001); McFee (2011), who both discuss the way that musical recordings provide access to the work.

³⁶ See McFee (2011) and Pakes (2013) for accounts of the applicability of the platonist view to dance ontology.

popular form of art to be experienced online. Indeed, the internet allows us to view a vast array of dance works and styles, and in many cases this is the only possible way to do so, due to temporal, geographical and financial constraints.

How then do we explain such experiences? McFee clarifies that,

while time spent watching the film is best described as exactly that, it is not exactly wrong to say that one spent one's time watching the dance – after all, one had been watching *that* film and not some other (McFee, 2011, 112).

McFee points out that he could truthfully say that he had spent the afternoon watching *Ghost Dances* (Bruce 1981), even if he had only been watching the film (2011: 112), although he maintains that we would not have *truly* seen the work. Following Thomason's view, however, this cannot be the case, as ontological claims should be based in social practices. Sparshott suggests that when we watch a film of a dance there are several different things that we can say we are doing (1995: 441). We may say that we see the performance on film or a film of the performance. We might say we see an "image" or "view" of the performance, or that we see the filmmaker's interpretation (1995: 441), although he admits that not all of these options occur in practice (1995).

McFee raises an analogy with sport to justify his position. He suggests that,

sports fans want to attend the matches, even though the view from one's couch is more comfortable (McFee 2011: 114).

This comparison highlights the significance of live performance. However, despite the fact that sports fans want to attend matches, when asked, 'did you see the match', it is legitimate and normal to answer 'yes' even when one only saw it on TV. There is a hierarchy applied to experiences of sport that I suggest is useful for understanding dance works. To see a football match at the time and place that it is occurring is perhaps the most desired form of experience. Following this, to see the match through a screen, as it occurs, is second best (of course one could contend that they would rather watch the match in the pub with their friends, but this is likely to include acknowledgement that this is widely considered a secondary experience to attending the game). A third option is to view the whole game via a recording. Even these distinctions are not always entirely clear; time delay and the ability to record, pause and fast-forward TV means that one's temporal relationship to the event can change during the match. Importantly, following each of these situations the spectator is likely to claim that they saw the game. One last way of viewing the match would be to watch edited highlights. In this case fans are likely to explain that they missed the match, even though they know what happened.

This way of discussing and viewing sport relates closely to social conventions around music, as demonstrated by Stephen Davies (2001), who also draws a comparison with sport. He suggests it is equally legitimate to experience sports and musical broadcasts via technological transmission,

[j]ust as someone can truly say, “I saw the first game of the World Series yesterday,” though he watched it on TV, so Ham can truly say “I heard the first performance of Minimo’s new quartet last night,” though he listened to the radio and was not at the concert (Davies 2001: 301).

I suggest this state of affairs also applies to dance. Although it may be preferable to attend a performance event, or P-instance, a live screening provides an alternative way to see the work. This form is one stage removed from the provenance of the work, and lacks the physical presence of the dancer. Still, it partially maintains its ‘live’ status, due to its shared temporality with the event. Therefore I suggest that a live screening can be considered an E-instance. Failing this, a recording allows us to see what occurred on stage and arguably offers an alternative form of E-instance. The acquisition of knowledge is central to this claim. While one might wish to argue that a recording fails to provide access to the relevant properties required for appreciation, the counter-argument remains that the repeatable format of recordings means that they provide the potential for *greater* knowledge of the work than encountering the work in live performance. Indeed it is often exactly this methodology that leads people to make claims of expertise. Examining the language a fan would use might also give insight into the status of edited recordings. Just as a sports fan who has only seen edited highlights is unlikely to claim that they saw the match, dance fans are

unlikely to claim to have seen a work having viewed only a short excerpt. Perhaps we can say, broadly speaking, that one can claim to have seen a work only when they have viewed a full-length recording or screening, attended to in an appropriate manner.

So where does this leave the type/token schema? If a performance is viewed via a screen at the same time as the event is happening on stage, what prevents it from being a token of the work? Since the performance token is occurring and being experienced in real time,³⁷ there seems no obvious reason, other than historical convention, to argue that one must be in the *same place* as the dancers in order for the instance to count as a token of the work. However, because one object or instance cannot be any more a token than any other, the type/token schema does not allow for a hierarchical structure. While one might claim that Monday's performance was better than Tuesday's both performances are either tokens of the work or not. It does not seem to follow, therefore that recordings, screenings and live performances can all to be tokens of the work, since live performances, or P-instances, hold a privileged position.³⁸ So can we maintain this way of thinking about the form? One possibility from Sparshott (1995) is to consider each performance as both a token and a type, of which there might be further tokens. However, this does not help us to determine which of these tokens are legitimate. Another possible avenue is to extend Sparshott's discussion of "hypertypes" (1995: 404) to develop a schema that allows for non-equal tokens, in accordance with Davies' distinctions between P and E

³⁷ See Stephen Davies (2001) for a detailed discussion of this issue in relation to music.

³⁸ I discuss this issue in more depth in Blades (2011).

instances. Unfortunately space does not permit such a development here, but it is clear that the issue warrants further attention.

The Body

We have not yet fully addressed the ontological centrality of the dancing body. McFee firmly believes that the way dance is made—with the body—means that it cannot be physically present without the dancer. This requires further exploration. The role of the body is not necessarily entirely disrupted by screenings and recordings; one might argue that the dancer is equally central to such instances as they are to live performances. However, recent dance practices pose a more pertinent challenge to this view. Discourses have recently reflected upon the expansion of the term ‘choreography’,³⁹ which is no longer applied solely to the planning of conventional dances. Scholars and artists, including Cvejić (2006), Mårten Spångberg (2012), Jenn Joy (2014) and Lepecki (2012b) have written about the way that artists such as Xavier Le Roy, Jérôme Bel and Mette Ingvarsten challenge the perceived dependence of dance upon the moving body. Both Spångberg and Cvejić (writing with Le Roy), draw connections between recent choreographic practices, which use stillness, parody, text, untrained bodies, material objects and so forth, and ‘conceptual’ visual art, such as Marcel Duchamp’s presentation of ‘ready made’ objects in art galleries in the 1960s. Each scholar suggests independently that choreography is increasingly associated with ideas and discourse, as opposed to purely the plotting of movement structures in space.

³⁹ See Allsop and Lepecki (2008) for a detailed discussion of this topic.

This shift in thinking around what constitutes choreography is evidenced through the development of choreographic works by established dance artists, which do not involve the traditional performance of a human body. Forsythe's *Scattered Crowd* (2002), for example, is a performative installation involving thousands of white balloons, through which the viewer moves. Other choreographers are experimenting with the role of the body on stage. For instance, Ingvarsten's *The Artificial Nature Project* (2012) uses dancers to perform purely functional movement in order to control the behaviour of hundreds of pieces of metallic paper. This paper gives the work material form and the focus is on the movement of these materials, as opposed to the dancer. This challenges the link between the notion of choreography and the organisation of bodies in space. However, the composition of the paper arguably provides reference to the body through its materiality. Of course, 'choreography' and 'dance' are not exactly the same thing (Forsythe 2008), and one may wish to argue that these works are not dance at all. However, the difficulties of defining dance means that recognition of the form is often dependent upon context and authorship.⁴⁰ Thus, as established dance artists question the role of the body, they increase the breadth of the form.

Technology is playing an important role in the evolution of dance as the increasing developments in and digitisation of dance challenge the centrality of the body. There are many examples of digital dance practices in which works are performed by

⁴⁰ See Jones (1999) and McFee (1992, 2011) for discussions of the issue of definition for dance.

avatars or within immersive technological contexts.⁴¹ There are now computer programs that allow artists to develop movement on a screen using digital shapes and avatars,⁴² disrupting the view that dance-making concerns solely the body. Furthermore, 'choreographic objects' demonstrate dance analysis and scoring practices that focus on cultivating alternative expressions of choreographic principles without the human body.⁴³ Indeed, more choreographers are adopting digital tools to share features of their work that are not accessible in live performance alone, as is demonstrated by the case studies examined in this research. These objects are often developed with the intention of enhancing appreciation of the work.⁴⁴ Each of these examples requires in-depth consideration, and each has a unique relationship to the screen, the abstract work and concrete performances. Importantly, the body is not entirely absent from each example, it is either literally or metaphorically present, however, it frequently adopts a different, less pivotal role than in conventional performance events.

Types o Digital Instance

As previously mentioned, there are many ways in which dance is transmitted digitally.

Below I attempt to sketch some preliminary categories in order to move towards a

⁴¹ The work of Gibson and Martelli provides clear examples of this.

⁴² Such as *Life Forms* (Cunningham and Simon Fraser University 1991) See Schiphorst (1993); *The Choreographic Language Agent* (Wayne McGreogor | Random Dance and Open Ended Group 2009) See deLahunta (2009a).

⁴³ As is the case with *Synchronous Objects*.

⁴⁴ I explore this issue in relation to aesthetic empiricism and post-structuralist views in a chapter in 'Scoring Work and Process: The Ontological Implications of Scoring Practices for Dance' (2015).

more detailed understanding of the various forms of digital dance transmission. In the case of dance on film, cases can generally be categorised as either, 'born live' or 'born digital'. 'Born live', means that the dance exists initially in live form, and has either been recorded, or is streamed live. Examples of 'born live' digital objects include; recordings of live performances - such as those we can find on video sharing sites, and in university libraries, television shows with live audiences and live screenings, watched either online, in public or on cinema screens.

'Born digital' objects are films are made primarily for the screen, such as dance films, or some forms of online performances. They are not representations of live performances. Rather, the digital manifestation is the primary mode of sharing the work. It is important to mention that 'Born digital' objects usually, (although not always) involve an instance of live dancing. The distinction therefore resides in the role of the audience in relation to the type of work. For example, in the case of dance films, such as Belgian choreographer Wim Vandekeybus's *Silver* (2000),⁴⁵ viewing the work involves watching the film. Being present during filming would not constitute watching the work anymore than watching the making of a Hollywood movie would count as seeing the film. Interestingly, this implies that television programmes without a live audience would be categorised as 'born digital', whereas their live counterparts are 'born live'. Whether or not the programme is broadcast live is not an issue here, rather whether or not the work is primarily performed to either a present

⁴⁵ This film was based on one scene from the stage work *7 For a Secret Never to be Told* (Vandekeybus 1997), but is a new work which exists only as a dance film.

or digital audience. The work is made through filming, and therefore born digital, despite the fact that a live (private) event has occurred.

Recordings of conventionally live performance events are the primary form of 'born live' documentation. Broadly speaking, recordings can be divided into two categories. They are either 'complete', or 'edited'. Complete recordings maintain temporal faithfulness to the live event, while edited recordings on the other hand refer to films that alter the temporal pattern of the work. Complete recordings may be viewed either as excerpts or full films. Live screenings are also 'born live', and are initially instanced in temporal fullness, although once archived, they may occur in any of the forms outlined above.

As previously explained, 'born digital' films are those that are made to be primarily watched via a screen. Examples include dance films and online performances. There is an important distinction to be made regarding the difference between an online performance watched live, and one seen after the event. Equally important is some consideration of the role of film. In 'born live' objects it is possible to conceptualise the film as a platform through which the dance is re-presented. However, in specially rendered dance films this becomes more difficult as the film is an essential part of the art work.⁴⁶ As the title 'dance film' implies, such cases seem to belong equally to both dance and film. McFee suggests that such instances are not dance at all, but hybrid objects (2011: 109- 112). I maintain that the inclusion of dance film under the rubric of 'film' by no means limits its status as dance. However, what is clear is that the

⁴⁶ There is a vast field of literature that specifically addressed screendance. See Brannigan (2011), Dodds (2001) Mitoma (2002) Rosenberg (2012), to name a few. *The International Journal of Screendance* is also dedicated to this topic.

central role of the technology means that 'born digital' objects cannot be conceptualised in quite the same way as those that are 'born live'.

Summary

The claim that dance works can only be accessed through conventional forms of live performance is based on a traditional view of dance ontology. However, as with music and sport, digital technology has altered the way we engage with and refer to the form. Whilst I am not arguing here that the metaphysical nature of dance works are necessarily changed by recordings, I maintain that the way we think about dance ontology should reflect common practices. As Thomasson points out,

ontological disambiguation is achieved not by a philosophical and explicit decision on the part of grounders about what their term will refer to, but rather by appeal to background practices already in place that co-evolve with the use of the art-kind term. (Thomasson 2005: 12).

The implication of this view is that ontology and practice are intrinsically linked. I suggest that dance is not all that different to sport and music. However, our practices, examination and thinking around these forms have evolved more quickly. Furthermore, while one may wish to argue that the physical presence of a dancing body is an essential property for appreciation, emerging practices for the making, viewing, analysis, and documentation of dance challenge such a view.

Thus, I maintain that dance works can have digital instances. However, this does not mean that all digital representations of dance provide access to the work. Rather, I suggest that there is a hierarchical structure to our relationship with the work, dependent upon our temporal and spatial relationship to the primary instantiation. It is clear that the type/token schema does little to clarify which cases provide access to the dance work and that we require new systems for understanding the expanding form. The expanding nature of the form is foregrounded in the following chapter, in which I introduce the first case study, *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced*. Building on the discussions regarding scores and recordings I analyse some of the digital forms present on this 'choreographic object', in order to develop a picture of the role function and nature of the site.

Chapter Six: *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced*

Introduction

Red dots spread quickly through space; dividing, generating, expanding and connecting. They multiply quickly, creating dense patches of colour. Burnt orange marks new trails. The digital forms write over themselves, scribbling through space, expanding and multiplying. Green paths of energy travel vertically across the screen. Intersected by horizontal counterparts. Pathways become evident. The screen fills fast; accumulation generates complex visual patterns. Yet, the images become clearer; relationships, dynamics, pathways are established. Clarity appears through the chaos.

These images form part of *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced* (*Synchronous Objects*), an interactive digital dance 'score'⁴⁷ created by American choreographer William Forsythe in collaboration with researchers at Ohio State University (OSU). Forsythe worked with dance researcher Norah Zuniga Shaw and Maria Palazzi, director of the Advanced Computing Center for the Arts and Design alongside an inter-disciplinary research team comprising dancers from Forsythe's company, scientists, mathematicians, designers and geographers. This site is my first case study. Through description and analysis this chapter considers its function and implications for dance spectatorship, asking questions such as; what does the site

⁴⁷ The labelling of the site as a 'score' is contentious (See Zuniga Shaw 2014: 97). However, for the sake of this chapter I adopt the term, as it is used in the subtitle to the site.

reveal about the work? And, which analytic frameworks are at play?

As discussed in Chapter Two (pp. 42 – 48), dance is analysed in a wide variety of ways. This case study pays particular attention to the implicit analytic frameworks utilised on *Synchronous Objects*, in order to consider what this tells us about the way the work is conceptualised. Whilst scholars, such as Laban⁴⁸ and Hanna (1987) developed systems for the study of movement but it was not until the 1980s that analysis models for works of dance art were published (Foster 1986, Adshead *et al* 1988). This chapter draws connections between the model authored by Janet Adshead, Valerie A. Briginshaw, Pauline Hodgens and Michael Huxley and *Synchronous Objects*, to suggest that the score might represent a recalling of structuralist priorities and established dance analysis methods.

William Forsythe is an American choreographer, who began his career as a dancer with the Joffrey Ballet and later danced for the Stuttgart Ballet, where he became Resident Choreographer in 1976. In 1984 he moved to the Ballet Frankfurt, where he was Artistic Director until 2004. Upon the closure of the company he remained in Frankfurt and went on to start The Forsythe Company, with whom he developed many ensemble works, touring internationally and establishing himself as one of the most renowned contemporary choreographers of the 1990s and 2000s. In 2014 Forsythe announced that he would be leaving The Forsythe Company, to take up a Professorial position at the University of Southern California (Calbi and Engel 2014)

⁴⁸ See Hutchinson Guest (2005).

Forsythe is an active researcher. *Synchronous Objects* is the second major project in an on-going line of enquiry from Forsythe and his team concerning ways in which 'choreographic thinking' (Forsythe 2008) can be shared through technology. Forsythe's interest in this area dates back to the production of the CD-Rom *Improvisation Technologies: A Tool for the Analytical Dance Eye (Improvisation Technologies)* in 1999. Performance theorist Rebecca Groves explains how,

[i]n the mid 1990s, Forsythe began developing a multimedia dancer training program to codify and teach principles of improvisation he had created (Groves 2007: 93).

This tool uses video annotation to map Forsythe's movement and visualise the relationships between body parts, which helps the viewer to see the form and shape of the movement, highlighting otherwise invisible relationships, pathways and traces.

This item has been removed due to 3rd Party Copyright. The unabridged version of the thesis can be found in the Lancaster Library, Coventry University.

Synchronous Objects furthers this enquiry, this time focussing on a single work. The site analyses and maps the choreography of Forsythe's stage work *One Flat Thing, reproduced* (2000), using a film version by Thierry de Mey from 2006. The site comprises twenty digital objects, each of which is inspired by the question, "[w]hat else might physical thinking look like?" (Forsythe and OSU 2009). They explore the principles of Forsythe's choreography through methods such as graphs, interactive tools, animation, annotation and more. Every one of the objects warrants in-depth description and consideration beyond the scope of this chapter. However, for the sake of this case study I provide an overview of the score, before focussing on five interrelated objects in more detail.

The project was developed in collaboration with a large research team from a variety of disciplines. The website lists 27 team members from various OSU departments such as, Geography, Design, Statistics and Dance, alongside Forsythe Company members and scholars from Dance, Philosophy and Neuroscience. In order to develop the score the team analysed the film of *One Flat Thing, reproduced* and gathered extensive data regarding its structural features. This data was used to develop the objects on the site. Unlike some dance scores, *Synchronous Objects* is not intended as a resource for reconstruction or a tool for instantiation (Zuniga Shaw 2009). Although there are other artists working on related projects there is no established or universal method for such research. The novel combination of motivations meant that the team could not adopt a single existing system. Instead they drew on approaches from their various disciplines and were also required to develop new methods (Zuniga Shaw 2009). The result of this inter-disciplinary

approach is that the objects on the site vary greatly from one another. Some are didactic, leading users through a clear path and demonstrating a motivation to educate. Others are more expressive, aiming to capture and replicate the 'affect'⁴⁹ of movement. Despite their distinctions, each object is concerned with analysing and revealing the structures of the work. Furthermore, they are unified by the way that they arise from data generated through analysing the source film.

The Work

The stage version of *One Flat Thing, reproduced* was choreographed for the Ballet Frankfurt. A performance of the work in 2014 is described by American dance critic Roslyn Sulcas as,

a showstopper. Fourteen dancers, 20 tables: Mr. Forsythe does the math. Jumping, sliding, gliding, swerving; ducking between, under and over the tables, the dancers simultaneously evoke the crazed, random energy of adolescence and a highly ordered, high-wire act of interlocking systems (Sulcas 2014).

Following this account it seems that the filmed version does not depart from the dynamics of the stage work, it is fast-paced, frenetic and highly charged. Seventeen dancers whizz around a huge, high-ceiling space, contorting their bodies over a carefully placed grid of twenty tables. The action takes place in what appears to be an empty train depot. As the film begins the colourfully clothed dancers storm the space,

⁴⁹ See Apostolou-Hölscher (2014), Manning (2007, 2013), Rubidge (2009), for discussions of the notion of 'affect' in relation to dance.

rushing towards the camera, dragging the tables behind them. Once the set is in place the space empties, leaving two male dancers moving between the table-tops. The duo move in counterpoint; the dancer on the right throws an arm, carving an arc through space, as the movement reaches the space of the second dancer, he kicks his leg on a straight, direct trajectory. Both move very fast and they are positioned close together. The effect of this is that their actions seem to relate, even though they do not exactly correlate. Other cast members gradually join the action. There are very few recognisable movements or motifs. Each dancer dances their own dance, generating a mass of quickly moving bodies. The action accelerates, creating a sense of chaos. Yet, fleeting moments of unison make it clear that this chaos is actually highly organised. There are rules and structures that we cannot necessarily see.

Sulcas suggests:

Mr. Forsythe brilliantly constructs the chaos to resolve into sudden movements of alignment. The organization of shape (legs stretching straight up), directions (heads turning the same way) and dynamics (everyone speeding or slowing) keep the eye focused and the machinery of the work in order. It's fascinating, exhilarating; like nothing you have seen before (Sulcas 2014).

This description provides an example of how a viewer may see the structure of the work. However, Sulcas's position as a dance critic implies that she has extensive experience of viewing and analysing dance. In contrast, viewers who are less used to 'reading' choreography may well miss the organisational indicators that keep Sulcas focussed.

For example, Noë describes it as a,

complex phenomenon, that is to say, as an event; the work is compelling and absorbing, but it is also, like many dances, and like life itself and the environments we occupy, very difficult to understand; that is, it is nearly impossible to command a clear view of it (Noë 2009).

This is a problem that *Synchronous Objects* seeks to resolve. The site aims to ‘unlock’ the structures of the work, in order to help users recognise the systems of organisation underlying the movement, disambiguating the dance and providing a ‘way in’ to the work. Manning outlines the way that the score is intended to target a,

cross-disciplinary audience that departs from the strict arena of dance studies to include mathematicians, architects, cognitive scientists and philosophers, to name a few (Manning 2013: 98).

The adoption of a wide range of methods can be seen as an attempt to draw viewers from other fields to Forsythe’s work.

The Score

The homepage for the site is mostly white, with a thick lime-green stripe travelling through the centre of the screen. In the middle is a small box playing the film of *One Flat Thing, reproduced*. From the initial encounter with the site, the user is presented with choices, for example, they can choose to skip the introduction and decide between viewing the site as a full or windowed screen. The menu page invites users to take control of their experiences, which introduces them to a key feature of the

site. Although not every object is strongly interactive,⁵⁰ the user is invited to play an active role. The quantity of information means that visits to the site require readers to select which objects to attend to. Furthermore, navigation is non-prescribed; users must decide in which order to access information, and decode the objects they encounter. However, they are offered some guidance. For example, the introductory text reads:

From dance to data to objects, *Synchronous Objects* reveals the interlocking systems of organization in the choreography of William Forsythe's *One Flat Thing, reproduced* (2000). Those systems were quantified through the collection of data and transformed into a series of objects that allow the user to explore choreographic structures and reimagine what else they might look like (Forsythe and OSU 2009).

This description may seem a little perplexing at first as *Synchronous Objects* does not readily relate to any other site. Furthermore, the intention to quantify dance data is perhaps unfamiliar to dance audiences. Therefore, an important feature of the score is the way that it continuously clarifies the methods used and information presented, through the use of an 'Object Explanation' and 'Process Catalog', which outline the functions and processes of making the objects. Zuniga Shaw (2014) discusses the significance of the Process Catalogs, describing them as an attempt to address the power imbalance that is produced by scores. She suggests that, "[s]cores tend to invoke ideas of right and wrong and authorial truth" (Zuniga Shaw 2014: 101) and that the team wanted to acknowledge the partiality of the score and encourage the user's subjectivity through disclosing how the objects were made.

⁵⁰ See Lopes (2001) for a detailed discussion of forms of interactivity in relation to art.

The introductory page helps to clarify the terminology and concepts of the site. It includes three essays, addressing; 'The Dance', 'The Data' and 'The Objects'. 'The Dance' essay, jointly authored by Forsythe and Zuniga Shaw discusses the stimuli and movement material for *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, which is described as "an ensemble dance that reconfigures classical choreographic principles of counterpoint" (Forsythe and Zuniga Shaw, 2009). The authors explain that counterpoint in the work is generated through the interaction of three structural systems: the movement material, the cueing and the alignments. They go on to clarify that the dance comprises fixed movement material with some structured improvisation (Forsythe and Zuniga Shaw 2009). It is further explained that there is no set terminology for referring to the movement, but that "members of the company most often refer to the different segments of fixed movement as themes" (Forsythe and Zuniga Shaw 2009). There are 25 key themes, which are repeated and combined in various ways throughout the dance. This type of information is important. As previously suggested, the novel nature of the site perhaps makes it unfamiliar, therefore grasping the terminology, such as how the term 'theme' is used in this context, is essential to fully understanding the site.

Forsythe and Zuniga Shaw explain that the work is organised by an elaborate system of cues between the dancers, which comprises more than 200 cues over the course of the fifteen- minute dance (2009). Alignments between the dancers are another important feature of the work. These are described as, "[s]hort instances of synchronization between dancers in which their actions share some, but not

necessarily all, attributes” (Forsythe and Zuniga Shaw 2009). This explanation demonstrates how alignments are not exactly the same as unison. They can occur between two dancers doing different movements, as long as they share some features. By ‘attributes’ Forsythe and Zuniga Shaw are perhaps referring to features such as the direction, dynamics and speed of movements. There are thousands of alignments, which occur continuously throughout the dance. However, for the sake of data extraction a sub-set of these are identified, labelled as ‘sync-ups’, of which there are approximately 200 (Forsythe and Zuniga Shaw 2009).

The decision to record the relationships between movements that are not exactly the same demonstrates the analytic priorities of the score. None of the 20 objects analyse the specific movement material. In contrast to Labanotation, for example, the behaviour of the dancers’ individual body parts avoids deconstruction. Rather the emphasis is on the structural whole, the relationships between the dancers, and the dynamic shape of the work. It appears that this approach arises from Forsythe’s conceptual framework. In a spoken commentary he suggests that,

[w]hen I read the piece I try to read the entire picture. I try not to read a particular person because it was composed as an entirety (Forsythe 2009).

Zuniga Shaw explains a little about the process of making the score. She discusses how the team firstly identified the structures present in the dance and gathered the relevant data relating to these structures. Secondly they found ways to store and access this data. She describes how this resulted in two sets of data; ‘spatial data’,

which arose from the source film, and ‘attribute data’ which came from dancers’ accounts (Zuniga Shaw 2009), both of which contributed to making the various objects on the site. Interestingly Zuniga Shaw describes the process as “codification” (2014: 110), drawing connections with the traditional view of dance scoring.

Palazzi explains how the team initially used annotations to unpick the visual complexity of the dance so that they could understand the core systems (2009). They then built on these to generate charts, animations and maps. She suggests that the objects serve various functions, for example; some objects, “showcase our work in annotating the dance” (2009), while others invite the user to explore and experiment with the principles of the work. Palazzi describes another group of objects, comprising animations generated using data from the dance as, “wonderfully complex, abstract animations” (Palazzi 2009). Lastly she suggests that some of the objects use the quantitative properties of the dance to “empower new composition” (Palazzi 2009). The quantifying of movement occurred through the deconstruction of the structure of the dance, and the subsequent transformation of bodily movement into digital data. This data was then used to develop objects such as animations and 3D graphs, which offer new expressions and compositions. The descriptions of the objects from Palazzi do not provide distinct categories, however they illustrate the various methods used by the team and the broad approach of the site.

The Dance

The objects are arranged in five columns on the menu page. Moving from left to right they become increasingly abstract.

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Figure 3: *Synchronous Objects* menu page (Forsythe and OSU 2009)

At the top of the far left column, and therefore the first object to be encountered if following western reading practices is an object entitled 'The Dance'. Central to this object is the filmed version of *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, which is surrounded by data. On the right hand side of the film is a control panel, which allows the user to decide the perspective to view the dance from. They can choose between a front-on, overhead or close-up view. Users can also select whether to view cue and alignment annotations, which are laid over the film. Furthermore, the dance can be accompanied either by ambient sound, the score from the live work by Thom Willems, Forsythe's 'sing through' (Forsythe and OSU 2009), or a spoken commentary from Forsythe.

The choices made by the user have a significant impact on the viewing experience. For example, watching the dance with and without annotations offers very different experiences. The annotations draw attention to the specific cues and alignments as well as the overall dynamics and energy of the movement. They generate a striking aesthetic, enhancing certain features of the dance. The choice of sound accompaniment also impacts significantly on the experience of the work. Willems' score provides an atmospheric musical accompaniment. At times evoking an electronic industrial wasteland, at other times dark and foreboding. The sound heightens the sense of drama, perhaps invoking a stronger emotive response than when viewing the movement alone. In contrast, choosing ambient sound serves to echo and reflect the sparse nature of the space, and draws attention to the abstract, non-emotional nature of the movement.

Forsythe's 'sing through' demonstrates a frequently used method by choreographers, who often use their voice to illustrate the dynamic qualities of movement in rehearsal and teaching. This method is also used by British choreographer Wayne McGregor and is referred to by cognitive scientist David Kirsch as 'sonification' (2011). In this instance it focuses the viewer's attention on the rhythms, dynamics and flow of the movement. The sound closely correlates with the energy and effort of the dancers' movement. Large curves of the arms are illustrated by vocal 'whooshes'. As a dancer jumps on to the table the effort is embodied in Forsythe's accompanying grunt. The labour of the movement is foregrounded, as vocals and bodies interact and the effort and energy of human movement is made evident. The notion of 'sonification' refers

to sounds as well as words, it has a relationship to breath and therefore is a way for the choreographer or teacher to express movement dynamics, linking the expression of the voice to the expression of the body, as is demonstrated by Forsythe's commentary.

The spoken commentary from Forsythe offers yet another reading of the work. He discusses the use of counterpoint, explaining how it involves different movements that occur together but that are not performed in unison, and contextualising the notion by discussing how it is used in choreography and other contexts, such as animation (Forsythe 2009). This provides a more cerebral experience than the sensual soundscapes previously discussed. Forsythe encourages the viewer (and listener) to see the form and structure of the work, arguably offering a directed, educational experience. It is possible to layer the aural accompaniment, thus enhancing the complexity of the experience. For example, combining Forsythe's spoken commentary with Willems' sound score generates a rich spectatorial experience, calling on aesthetic, sensual and cerebral faculties.

Below the film is a moving graph. The dancers' names are listed down the left hand side. A vertical bar moves across visually complex coloured shapes and lines, plotted on a horizontal stave. At the bottom of the graph users can add or remove data relating to the cues, movement and sync ups. On the left hand side of the screen attribute data in the form of written texts provide a commentary to the movement, describing the dancers, themes, cues and alignments. These graphs, data sets and annotations can only serve their function once they are understood. In much the

same way that a Labanotation score is written in a codified language, and requires the appropriate training to be understood, *Synchronous Objects* requires digital literacy. For example, the use of the word 'data' to describe the information extracted from movement analysis reiterates the digitalisation of the movement. Whilst the term 'data' can refer to information in a wide variety of forms, here the word indicates computerised data, resituating the movement within the digital sphere. The terminology of the site combined with the volume of information means that at first glance this object might appear difficult to engage with for those who do not possess the relevant forms of knowledge. Responses to the language and information depend upon the background knowledge of the user. For instance, those who are used to accessing data in this form and have high levels of digital literacy are perhaps less likely to be daunted by the site. Similarly, Palazzi describes the initial response to *One Flat Thing, reproduced* from those on the team who were viewing contemporary dance for the first time. She explains that they were not sure how to understand the work, but that learning about the choreographic structures from Forsythe allowed them to draw connections between dance and their individual disciplines and make sense of the work. She suggests,

[s]uddenly we were released from looking for a linear story and instead could engage with *One Flat Thing, reproduced* as a contrapuntal composition of complex relationships, patterns and trends (Palazzi 2009).

This articulation demonstrates how understanding the choreographic structure allowed the team to 'read' the dance.

In much the same way that Palazzi and her team needed further information to understand *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, some users will require information in order to fully understand what it is that is being demonstrated through the graphs and data sets. This observation from Palazzi relates to a recurring theme on the site involving the perceived importance of *understanding* the movement. The aim to demonstrate the choreographic structure of the work implies that this knowledge will enhance the users experience of the dance.

Alignment Annotations

The 'Alignment Annotations' object offers a focussed consideration of the alignment data. The object demonstrates how the annotations work through the use of colour-coded lines and curves overlaid on the film to show how movements relate. The annotations have an important practical function, to "make the spatial and temporal patterns of the dance's alignments spring into view as you watch" (Forsythe and OSU 2009). The movement is annotated in real time, meaning that the annotations are only visible as long as the moment of alignment between the dancers occurs. The result of this is that they echo the rhythms and dynamics of the movement. They appear as part of the dance, enhancing the form and flow of the movement. The annotations can also be viewed without the film. Exclusive of the dancers, the coloured forms carve through black space. Spiralling geometric forms (dis) appear; arising and fading from nowhere. They circle around each other, intersecting and continuing on. The animations move quickly. They leave nothing behind: traceless

traces of invisible movement. The dancers' bodies are no longer present, yet their energetic impetus is maintained.

The object includes an explanatory video, which demonstrates how the annotations reveal the alignments between the dancers. The video adopts pedagogic approaches, for example, text on the screen encourages the user to try and identify alignments without the animations, before demonstrating how they work. Suddenly the relationships are revealed, the structure of the movement becomes clearer. Although this site adopts a range of new and existing methods the analytic framework is not entirely new. The motivations of this object align with the systematic dance analysis model proposed by Adshead *et al* (1988).

The motivations for analysing dance relate to the relationship between understanding and appreciation. In the Introduction to *Dance Analysis: Theory and Practice* Adshead outlines her belief that the analysis of dance is beneficial for appreciation (1988: 7 -9), suggesting that analysis, "is crucial in coming to understand dance, to appreciate it more deeply and to value it" (1988: 12). Adshead's claim is not without its critics, aesthetic purists might suggest that art should be appreciated without deconstruction. However, Adshead argues for its importance, further suggesting that analysis is useful for the choreographer, as well as teachers, historians and directors (1988: 7). Her claims relate to *Synchronous Objects* on two accounts; firstly Adshead's belief that analysis and understanding leads to appreciation can be compared to the motivations of the site, which both offers and encourages analytic readings of *One Flat Thing, reproduced*. Secondly, the relevance and importance of analysis for

Forsythe's practice, and the intention to encourage him and others to think differently about his work is suggested at various points throughout the site. For example, Zuniga Shaw writes,

[b]ecause we focussed on the dance as a choreographic resource — rather than scoring it for the process of preservation — we are empowered to take this rigorous process of data collection into new creative spaces. We hope our choices, aesthetic and analytic, generate new possibilities for ongoing creativity and research, both in the studio and in the lab (Zuniga Shaw 2009)

This articulation demonstrates the motivation to feed back into practice, however, the ways that this might happen are left open.

Synchronous Objects adopts a similar analytic standpoint to Adshead's model, which emphasises the relationships between the components and form of the work, and the viewer's interpretation and evaluation. The focus is very clearly on "*the dance itself*" (Adshead 1988: 6 [Adshead's emphasis]), in this sense the model is structuralist in both method and intention, focussing solely on the analysis of the closed structure of the work and inter-dependent relations between the components.

Writing a decade after Adshead's proposition, Jordan and Thomas point out that,

[a]s a mode of analysis, structuralism seeks to explain surface events, in this case a dance, in terms of the structures that lie below the surface level and that underscore it. Moreover, from this viewpoint, the art work is treated as a structure that functions as an emerging coherent whole, constantly in the process of structuration through its own determinate internal rules (Jordan and Thomas 1998: 151).

The 'Alignment Annotations' object demonstrates how *Synchronous Objects* can be seen as a re-calling of structuralist methods. Referring back to Forsythe's suggestion that he composed and reads the work as an entirety (2009), the annotations analyse behaviour of individuals only in relation to one another.

Video Abstraction Tool

The 'Video Abstraction Tool' is one of four interactive tools on the site. It allows users to customise how they view the dance by using filters to create various visual affects. The filters were developed using frame differencing, which allows for the visual realisation at the differences between every frame in the video. For example, the 'Positive and Negative Space' filters leave outlines where the dancers move in space. Users can choose to use either accumulative or fading images. Furthermore, trails of motion can also be watched without the dancers. The tool allows users to generate individual artistic renderings of the movement, actively responding to the research question by generating alternative manifestations of physical thinking. This object closely relates to the motivation to "explore the idea of a generative trace of a dance" (Zuniga Shaw 2009). The generative nature of the project is demonstrated through user interactivity. This object allows the user to exercise autonomy and engage actively and critically in the exploratory process of deconstruction and re-building choreographic structures.

The 'trace' is a recurring theme in discussions of dance, particularly in relation to questions of documentation⁵¹. The 'Trails Long' filter allows for the visualisation of the virtual trails of the dancers' movement, creating a tangible trace of the movement.

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Figure 4: The 'Trails Long' filter (Forsythe and OSU 2009)

Michael Andereck, a graduate student from the department of Computer Science and Engineering at OSU narrates the explanatory film. He describes the filter as "helping you remember what just happened" (Andereck 2009). This is a unique approach to the documentation of movement, and one afforded by the development of digital technology. Instant documentation poses challenges to existing and well-versed discourses regarding the ontological centrality of ephemerality discussed in previous chapters (pp. 24 – 25 and 57 – 60), by allowing past and present movement

⁵¹ Mark Franko (1995) and Andre Lepecki (2004b) both consider Jacques Derrida's notion of the 'trace' as a way of thinking about the ephemerality and documentation of dance. See also Franz Anton Cramer (2007: 1-2), who suggests that dance is in some ways defined by the way that it leaves no trace, yet is more than just a dancer dancing.

to co-exist. Furthermore, dance documentation has historically focussed on how to preserve the work for future viewing and performance, whereas this tool offers a form of instant preservation of the elusive trace of movement, in order to inform the immediate viewing experience.

Other tools on the site include the 'Counterpoint Tool', which allows users to experiment with counterpoint by controlling digital 'widgets'. The 'Cue Visualizer' provides a visual map of the relationships between dancers, and allows the user to control elements of what they see. Lastly, the 'Generative Drawing Tool' features digital 'brushes' that can be moved around the screen.

Statistical Counterpoint

The 'Statistical Counterpoint' object is a graph that maps the movement of the dancers. It can be seen as a response to the goal of the project to "enrich cross-disciplinary dialogue between art and science" (Forsythe and OSU 2009). One of the aims in the development of this object was to see how methods used by statisticians to map weather patterns might inform understand of the choreographic structure of the work (Forsythe and OSU 2009). It uses software called gGobi, which features a 'brushing' capability to show statistical views of the data (Forsythe and OSU 2009). The graph comprises three views; the multivariate view is the most prominent, which maps the dancers' names against cues given and cues received. To the right of this is the spatial view, which demonstrates cues. Below is a temporal view, which demonstrates the same data but in relation to time. By 'brushing' or 'painting' the

data, the graph visualises each dancer's contribution. Greater activity is demonstrated through increased density of yellow lines. It is not only the alignment data that is used here; variables also include cues, improvisation and so forth.

When Palazzi suggests that some of the objects “empower new composition” (2009), she uses the example of the interactive ‘Generative Drawing Tool’ to demonstrate this claim. Portanova pays particular attention to the generative nature of *Synchronous Objects*. She points out that,

the technology is generative not simply from a conceptual perspective, but also in technical terms: for example, in relation to the design of some generative objects, in which a few parametric changes can create different results (Portanova 2013: 87)

However, alongside the generative function of the interactive tools, the ‘Statistical Counterpoint’ object also empowers composition, generating new forms on screen, as well as providing information to feed back into choreographic practice. Noel Cressie, a professor of statistics at OSU who developed the graph, suggests that it may encourage the choreographer to think differently about their work. He explains that one of the motivations for the tool is “not only to summarise, but to inspire” (Cressie 2009). These motivations clearly align with Adshead's suggestion that analysis informs choreographic practice (1988: 7), and further demonstrate the generative nature of the site. Digital artists and theorists Casey Reas and Chandler McWilliams⁵² discuss the generative nature of digital art, suggesting that

⁵² This text is co-authored by LUST graphic design company.

transformation is a key feature (2010: 67 – 90). Transformation can take many forms, but what is important is the way that it inspires new relationships whilst maintaining a connection to the original form. Reas and McWilliams suggest,

[t]ransformation provides a way to express continuity between forms, data and ideas, When a work utilizes techniques of transformation, it retains a connection between its original and transformed versions, such radical transformations can reveal entirely new relationships (Reas and McWilliams (2010: 79).

Although this score is not intended as a tool for reconstruction or re-instantiation, the way that it reveals and inspires new relationships demonstrates a motivation to encourage generative activity from the user. This features perhaps helps to account for its labelling as a score. Although a direct relationship to action does not appear to be the primary function of the score, its generative capabilities suggest that it is not entirely removed from artistic practices.

3D Alignment Forms

There are multiple animations on *Synchronous Objects*, which take many forms. As with the other objects on the site, they arise from the choreographic data. For example, the data from the alignment annotations was used to develop the '3D Alignment Forms' object.

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Figure 5: '3D Alignment Forms' (Forsythe and OSU 2009)

The '3D Alignment Forms' object is a digital animation, lasting one minute and 50 seconds. Like the dance, the animation begins with the placing of tables; however, in this instance they are not dragged forth by the dancers, rather they materialise from space, placed on to a virtual floor. The camera is at floor level, looking between the table legs. The tables loom above, their sense of weight greatly enhanced by the casting of shadows on the imagined floor. The camera spans the space, revealing the structure of the set and generating a heightened sense of dimensionality. The animated tables are open frames with no top surface, shapes dance through the space where material once stood. At first the shapes are familiar — the alignment annotations re-appear. However, this time the gaps between the lines are filled with digital mesh, the result of a technique called 'lofting', used by boat designers (Palazzi 2009). The shapes become three-dimensional as the forms twist in space. Unlike the disappearing annotations, these forms accumulate, slowly building a virtual sculpture.

The camera spans, moving in and out of the shapes. Up close, the materiality of the form is revealed. The film plays with space perception, continuously moving and alternating between close and long shots. At one point the camera moves above the form, demonstrating that the sculpture resides in between the rear two sets of tables. As the camera shifts something about the dance is revealed; seeing how the shape occupies the virtual space helps the material the material form to emerge. It becomes clear that this contortion of material is reflective of the moving body.

The object explores the 'what else' of the research question, using information gathered from the movement material to explore new ways to express choreographic data and generate "wonderfully complex, abstract animations" (Palazzi 2009). Interestingly, despite the motivation to express choreographic principles without the body, viewing the animation in the context of *Synchronous Objects* arguably encourages the viewer to perceive the body-led nature of the images. For example, encountering the image without knowledge of how or why it was developed one would perhaps be less likely to think of the form as bodily. The image therefore occupies a paradoxical space, as the body is visibly removed, yet perceptually present.

The abstraction of the data into tools, animations and images demonstrate how the analytic priorities of the site are not restricted to a structuralist framework. Furthermore, the expression of the work outside of the remits of the human body demonstrates a re-thinking of how to analyse dance. The focus is not solely on the specific behaviour of the human body, but on the kinaesthetic impetus and evolving form of movement.

Summary

This chapter has introduced *Synchronous Objects*, and provided a preliminary discussion of some of the objects on the site. The objects examined have helped to demonstrate how Palazzi's articulations regarding the functions and motivations of the site, manifest through various forms of re-presentation. As mentioned previously (p.142), Palazzi suggests that the objects on the site serve a range of functions, including; to showcase the team's annotations, to encourage the user to explore and experiment with the principles of the work, to offer abstract animations and to empower new composition (Palazzi 2009). 'The Dance' provides an introduction to the work and the framework of the site. The 'Alignment Annotations' object introduces the annotation data that forms the basis of other objects. Furthermore, this object encourages users to see the movement in relation to Forsythe's structuralist choreographic framework. The 'Video Abstraction Tool' invites the user to engage in the active exploration of the research question, suggesting that this further supports understanding of the key features of the work. The 'Statistical Counterpoint' object shows how the data has been used to empower new compositions. The graph monitors each dancers' contribution to the work as a whole, allowing for the structure of the dance to be more clearly seen, foregrounding the structuralist tendencies of the site. Lastly, the '3D Alignment Forms' demonstrates the abstraction of the body and foregrounds kinaesthetic features of the movement.

This chapter started to explore the nature of 'choreographic objects', focussing on unpicking the unique nature of *Synchronous Objects*. Portanova points to the

“qualitative novelty” that arises through data visualisation (2013: 89), highlighting the newness of the object. Through the consideration of these objects it seems that *Synchronous Objects* can be understood, not only as offering novel aesthetic forms, but as demonstrative of an emergent form of dance analysis, which adopts structuralist priorities, whilst also capturing and evoking the expressive qualities of the work; an approach made possible through digital media. The next chapter continues to think through the role and nature of ‘choreographic objects’, considering the analytic and philosophical frameworks at play in the development of *Using the Sky*.

Chapter Seven: *Using the Sky*

Introduction

At first there is tapping. The noise made by walking in an empty room. The small figure of Jeanette Durning is moving in a circle. Once complete, she takes a few steps on a diagonal, her right-side leading; her body turned to the camera. Durning's arms move slowly at hip height, exploring the space around her. She stops. Dipping her head, she looks to the side, scooping the air in front of her. It is over quickly; Durning continues to travel. She stops again, this time looking to the ceiling. Her head bows briefly before recovering, her spine follows; smooth, snake-like. Meandering on, each movement left behind. Not much resonates. The recording is non-rewindable. The movement unrepeatable. It is calm, un-spectacular, each moment as significant as the last.

In a box next to Durning, Ros Warby travels in the opposite direction. Her arms search the air around her hips. She stops less frequently. At times her feet explore the air. Warby moves faster than Durning, the diagonal quickly completed, she walks a circular path in the centre of the space. Less pausing and less contact with the floor, Warby's movement is smooth, less weighted than Durning's. But something is the same. They do not perform the same movements, yet they are undoubtedly performing the same dance.

The dance in question is Hay's solo work *No Time To Fly* (2010). The recordings are part of *Using the Sky*, a digital score of the work developed in 2013, as part of the

Motion Bank project. As mentioned in Chapter One (p.2), this took place between 2010 – 2014, and resulted in digital scores of work(s) by Deborah Hay, Jonathan Burrows and Matteo Fargion, and Bebe Miller and Thomas Hauert. *Using the Sky* is the first score to be completed; a beta version was launched at the Tanzkongress in Düsseldorf in June 2013.

This chapter introduces *Using The Sky*, asking core questions, such as: What are the analytic and philosophical frameworks at play? And how is the work re-presented in this context? I consider how the site reveals multiple layers of materiality, virtuality, embodiment, object-hood and abstraction. I go on to propose that features of this digital score can be seen to operate within a ‘posthuman’ (Causey 2007, Hayles 1999, Braidotti 2013) framework, reconfiguring the role of the body in the reading and documentation of dance. Through an examination of the score in relation to theories from N. Katherine Hayles (1999), Rosi Braidotti (2013) and Matthew Causey (2007), I propose a pragmatic version of posthumanism, which acknowledges our reflexive relationship with the screen, whilst adhering to common practice regarding the way we interact with digital media.

Motion Bank

Motion Bank was a continuation of the *Synchronous Objects* project; it further explored ways to articulate and disseminate ‘choreographic thinking’ (Forsythe 2008). During the launch of *Using the Sky*, deLahunta explained that one of the key concerns for Motion Bank was the question; what can digital media offer in the project of

rendering process? (deLahunta 2013b). This project concentrated on the work of artists other than Forsythe, each with different approaches to dance making. Considering the question posed by deLahunta may help to understand the intended purpose and function of *Using the Sky*. The aim is reflective of the increased interest in sharing choreographic process and whilst the process of dance making often foregrounds the body, choreographers and theorists are simultaneously exploring the potentials of technology to facilitate, make and share dance. These interests may seem at odds; the digital and the flesh perhaps appear to be in a binary relationship. Therefore Motion Bank's research question, and the aim to research bodily practice and digital media in equal terms, is both timely and significant.

The Score

I want to choreograph exacting movement content that contains no end to discovery, where milliseconds of stunning recognition take place within a strict choreography in time and space. Where soundless rhythms drive the dance (Hay 2000: 81).

Deborah Hay's career spans six decades. She grew up and trained in New York City, going on to dance for Merce Cunningham in 1964, and work with Judson Dance Theatre. Despite being part of a burgeoning contemporary dance scene, in 1970 Hay moved to rural Vermont, thus began a life-long self-reflective enquiry into the nature of dance (Hay n.d.). Although Hay has choreographed for existing companies, such as Toronto Dance Theatre,⁵³ she is perhaps best known for her work with the Deborah Hay Dance Company and her solo works. *No Time to Fly* is one of many solos that Hay

⁵³ *Up Until Now* (2010)

has created for herself. The self-reflective nature of much of Hay's practice and opus means that it is possible to speculate that Hay's interest in scoring arises from a concern for the preservation and sharing of solos that are known only to her.

During a reading called 'The Continuity of Discontinuity' at the Tanzkongress in Düsseldorf in 2013 Hay suggested that her research is very limited, as it concerns only *her* body. Her practice is introspective; it is primarily concerned with listening to, and learning from her body, which she frequently refers to as her teacher (2000: xxxiv). The appearance of Hay's work is hard to summarise. She says of herself, "[i]t is difficult to describe her actions. It doesn't seem to be necessary" (2000: 23). Movement arises from repeated questions and considerations such as, "[w]here I am is what I need, cellularly" (2000: 6). Hay uses these provocations as the basis for exploring simple sequences of movement and challenging the habitual behaviour of the body. An interest in cells repeatedly occurs in Hay's writing, she told the audience in Düsseldorf that she is interested in re-configuring her three-dimensional body into a 'cellular' body (Hay 2013).

Once Hay had choreographed *No Time to Fly* she composed a score of the work using words and sketches. Hay's original text score was not articulated in individual sections. Similarly to Stark Smith's *Underscore* it provides an account of her thoughts at each stage of the dance. The prose is therefore primarily descriptive and does not present itself as strict instruction. Importantly *No Time to Fly* was created prior to the score, which was developed as a series of statements to provide a tool to transmit the principles of the work. As the score is activated these descriptions become

prescriptive. The score is distinct from rehearsal notes and scribbled sketches. Although such artefacts seem to provide the basis for the document, it is presented in a way that makes it easy for the reader to follow, thus implicating it as a tool for transmission.

Although originally descriptive, I refer to Hay's entries as 'directives', echoing their transition into prescription. Crucially, the text-score does not specify any movements. For example, the first directive reads:

I appear at the edge of the stage as the last few audience members take their seats. My behaviour is matter-of-fact. I have a lot of choices to make in advance of my entrance. I decide on my entrance site and the direction I will travel in relation to the audience, plus where that path will end. Then the light fades (Hay in Motion Bank 2013).

This section of text demonstrates how the score perfectly aligns with D'Amato's conception of "indeterminate language scores" (2014),⁵⁴ which deploy the ambiguity of language in order to allow (relative) freedom in interpretation. As is clear through the nature of the directives, the work does not consist of a repeatable movement structure; it can look different each time.

As mentioned in Chapter Two (p.35), dance works such as this — which possess flexibility of form — including, improvisation, interactive performances, and task-based dances are referred to by Rubidge as "open" (2000a: 7). *No Time to Fly* can be categorised as an open work, inasmuch as the identity of each instantiation is not

⁵⁴ D'Amato (2014) discusses Hay's work as an example of this approach to scoring.

dependent upon specific movement. However, as demonstrated in the opening paragraphs, despite differences in movement, when observing interpretations of the work on *Using the Sky*, the work is recognisable. The renditions are unified by a certain style or tone. This is potentially the result of the dancers' experience of working with Hay, alongside their detailed engagement with the text-score. It is possible to suggest that interpreting the score without knowledge of Hay's practice would not result in an instance of the work. Consequently, Hay's practice is central to the dancers' interpretations, meaning that the work is consistent and recognisable through features other than movement.

Different dance works are constrained by different types of identity conditions. For example, some works may be defined by a particular aesthetic or be dependent upon the use of a specific sequence of movement, piece of music and so on. However, in the case of *No Time to Fly*, the work's identity is arguably defined by its relationship to Hay's practice, and to the text-score. Engagement with both of these elements is fundamental to performing the work. For example, simply interpreting the text-score at random, with no knowledge of Hay's choreographic principles, would not qualify as an instance of *No Time to Fly*, as the work is essentially linked to the principles of Hay's practice. This is not always the case; dance works that are constrained by movement structures, for example, can arguably be correctly performed without knowledge of the choreographer's individual practice. However, Hay's work and practice are enmeshed.

In order to make *Using the Sky*, the text-score was sent to Durning, Warby and Juliette Mapp in December 2010. These three dancers had worked extensively with Hay in the past, and were therefore very familiar with her practice. The three “executants” (Hay and Motion Bank 2013) were instructed to practice the score alone for three months in order to create their own adaptations (Motion Bank 2103). These adaptations were recorded in April 2011 at the Forsythe studios in Frankfurt. Each dancer was recorded performing the work seven times resulting in 21 digital versions of *No Time to Fly*. The decision to use multiple versions was a response to the open nature of the movement content (Motion Bank 2013). The digital-score has a different function to the text-score, as suggested by deLahunta, the aim was to render choreographic process, as opposed to providing a tool for (re)instantiation. Because *No Time to Fly* is an open work, constrained by a set indeterminate instructions, which do not dictate a specific movement structure, using a single recording of one interpretation would be inappropriate, as it would suggest the work as synonymous with that specific set of movements.

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Figure 6 *Using the Sky* homepage (Motion Bank 2013)

The text score was divided into 30 units by the Motion Bank team. The 21 versions of *No Time to Fly* were then annotated using Piecemaker, a digital annotation tool developed by Forsythe Company member David Kern,⁵⁵ which allowed the team to align the sections of each interpretation with the directives of the text-score. The text-score is central to *Using the Sky*, which is accessed through the Motion Bank website. The site is made up of five 'sets', these are: 'Introduction to Concepts', 'Jeanine Durning and Ros Warby Insights', 'Digital Adaptation of "No Time to Fly"', 'Movement Character' and 'All Recordings (with Overlays) From April 2011'. The design of the site, in keeping with Hay's thinking, is not entirely linear. For example,

⁵⁵ A version of Piecemaker, *PM2GO* can be downloaded from the Motion Bank website: <http://motionbank.org/en/event/pm2go-easy-use-video-annotation-tool>

boxes of text overlap one another, so that access to information is disrupted, perhaps reflecting Hay's interest in discontinuity (Hay 2013).

The use of language further demonstrates how the site embodies Hay's thinking. The word "cell" is used to describe the organisation of information (Motion Bank 2013). This links Hay's perception of the body and her concern with human cells, with language from computer science - drawing together the biological and the digital. This perhaps implies the site as a living form, made up of numerous active components, proposing itself as a 'cellular' body.

This observation raises a core theme regarding the interplay between the body and the digital. It is possible to suggest that the involvement of digital technology to create, share and examine dance, poses a threat to the centrality of the body. This argument is based upon a conception of digital information as dis-embodied, operating under a paradigm whereby the 'real' body and the digital surrogate are oppositional forces. This distinction relates to Hayles' (1999) central thesis, she argues that the distinction between information and embodiment is based on flawed historical theorising and that the two are intrinsically linked.

The relationship between technology and bodily practices is particularly important in this context. Digitally scoring Hay's work is interesting partly because her practice focuses primarily on the on-going perception of her body in space. Unlike some other choreographers who might be concerned with constructing shapes, expressing emotions, or representing particular scenarios, Hay's concern is with learning from

her body. This approach offers a subversive rendition of traditional dualism,⁵⁶ whereby the mind is seen to control, command and instruct the body. This construction is often associated with traditional modes of dance training, during which dancers may be encouraged to engage their minds in order to control their bodies, by visualising the successful execution of certain movements for example. This strategy enforces the perceived dominance of the mind over the body - employing its strength to manipulate the body into behaving correctly. Although Hay's work arguably maintains a dualist perspective, the body dominates.

Hay's body-centric paradigm may not be easily transmitted in digital form. It is possible to suggest that experiences of the body are transmitted to other bodies only by sharing physical space, whereas digital forms can be seen as removed from the body, accessed solely by the mind. *Using the Sky* challenges these assumptions in multiple ways, including by generating digital objects that appeal to the kinaesthetic, or bodily sense of the observer.

Introduction to Concepts

This page contains many short clips of Hay and During discussing Hay's practice and *No Time to Fly*. The films are labelled by theme, so that the user can link the conversations together. The themes are: 'What If (Questions and Notes)', 'Continuity of Discontinuity, Nonlinear Versus Linear', 'Executants and Adaptations', 'Practice as

⁵⁶ Conventionally associated with the philosophy of René Decartes (1641 [republished in 1993])

Performance' and 'On Language'. Considering the themes alone introduces us to the key concepts of the work, which are further reflected in the design decisions. For example the films are edited into clips of approximately two minutes each, and arranged randomly across the set, as opposed to being grouped together by theme, or arranged in linear form. This continues the sense of discontinuity introduced on the homepage. Also on this page is the text-score, recordings of Mapp and During's adaptations and visualisations of travel paths and time variances.

The version of the text-score at the centre of this page includes extra notes from Hay's. For example, section 24 states simply, 'I mend the field', Hay's notes suggest:

Accepting any movement, I call it mend. At the same time it is an effort not to automatically produce arm or hand movements or behave like a mother hen (Hay 2013).

The inclusion of notes provides more information to the user about Hay's thinking. Furthermore they tell us something about the way in which Hay wrote the score. Some choreographers use their rehearsal notes as scores, or else these notes might be utilised by others as scores. However, in this case the score is more than merely Hay's choreographic notes, she deliberately chose how to describe each section of the work. The series of directives derives from, but is also distinct from, Hay's experiences, some of which we can access through the notes. Watching the recordings in correlation with the score creates a reciprocal deepening of understanding. It allows the user to see how the text might instigate movement, thus making sense of the directive, whilst potentially enhancing the user's understanding

of the work. The seemingly abstract movement reads differently in conjunction with the directives, as users are able to appreciate the performers' decision making, thus providing a framework through which to understand the movement.

The deepening of the user's understanding demonstrates a key motivation for 'choreographic objects'; to enhance appreciation through demystifying dance making and movement. The connection between understanding and appreciation is particularly apparent on the 'Introduction to Concepts' page. It seems that enhancing the user's understanding of *No Time to Fly* is arguably the primary focus of this set. For example, in the first video at the top of the page, Hay discusses how the dancers work with multiple questions. She suggests that these questions are like balls, which must be kept in the air (Hay in Motion Bank 2013). The four questions are listed under section two of the score:

What if the question "What if where I am is what I need?" is not about what I need but an opportunity to remember the question "What if where I am is what I need?"?

What if dance is how I practice my relationship with my whole body at once in relationship to the space where I am dancing in relationship to each passing moment in relationship to my audience? What if the depth of this question is on the surface?

What if my choice to surrender the pattern, and it is just a pattern, of facing a single direction or fixing on a singularly coherent idea, feeling, or object when I am dancing is a way of remembering to see where I am in order to dis-attach where I am?

What if how I see while I am dancing is a means by which movement arises without looking for it? (Hay in Motion Bank 2013).

Hay explains that it is these questions that form the continuity within *No Time to Fly* (2013). *Using the Sky* provides access to this information, and understanding how the dancers respond to these questions gives the movement significance that is arguably not possible to access without this knowledge.

In another film Hay outlines how the questions form part of her daily practice, in order to add interest to otherwise “dumb” movement (Hay in Motion Bank 2013). Moving both arms from above her head to the floor, Hay demonstrates a movement, then repeats it, whilst activating the question “[w]hat if all of space was altered?” (Hay in Motion Bank 2013) This allows the viewer to see how the reading of the movement is changed through the acquisition of this knowledge. Although the movement is the same, the addition of the question means that it now *appears* differently - as an exploration of the nature of space, and the power of the body to alter its surroundings. This example clearly demonstrates an aspect of Hay’s practice, explorations of this type are continually occurring for the dancer in Hay’s work. Therefore, once users have witnessed Hay’s demonstration they are arguably able to understand more about the layers of experience that contribute to the making and interpretations of the work, thus demonstrating the aims of this site.

Jeanine During and Ros Warby Insights

One of the sets on the site, ‘Janine Durning and Ros Warby Insights’, features articulations from Warby and Durning about their experiences of performing the work. Users are able to watch the dancers performing *No Time to Fly*, alongside the

text- score, and their written account of each section. The recordings are played in small boxes surrounded by diagrams, images and text. The way in which the recordings are not placed in either the largest or most central position on the page points to the significance of other components of the work, such as; the text-score, space and the dancers' experiences. The result of this is that the moving body is only one component in the user's conception of the work.

During's insights further demonstrate the centrality of the performer's experience to the instantiation of *No Time to Fly*. For example, section 10 of the Hay's text-score reads:

My body is still while joy and sorrow wash across my face like a stream of instances. When not streaming, my face may briefly return to normalcy, or it may sustain a single reflection of joy/sorrow for longer moments (Hay in Motion Bank 2013).

In one of the recordings of Durning performing this section users might notice her subtly changing facial expressions and inward focus. On the right, she explains:

So it's not from moment to moment, I'm sad this moment and then joyful this moment. It's that those two things are co-existing always. And one never achieves, never fully achieves one or the other. I also see joy and sorrow happening in the space, not just in my experience but it is happening all the time in who or what I see so the curtain may appear to be an image of either joyfulness or sorrow-ness. You really have to be empty there and not have a notion of how it's going to go (Durning in Motion Bank 2013).

Considering Durning's articulations might alter the user's reading of the work. Observing the moment solely in relation to Hay's score, viewers can perhaps start to see During expressing joy and sorrow, as prescribed by the directives. However, Durning's account demonstrates a deep engagement with the instructions. Users learn that During is not merely mimicking the emotions, but experiencing them in various ways. Observing her performing this moment in connection with her account might change our perception of it. Users of the digital-score are invited to see not a moment of pretence, or representation but of human experience. This further demonstrates how the digital-score might impact on the reading of the work and foregrounds features of it that are arguably imperceptible in performance alone.

Although the sets are not numbered, this page is positioned to the right of 'Introduction to Concepts' on the homepage, meaning that following the left to right navigation we arrive at this page after the previous one. This seems important when encountering the site for the first time. Without accessing the information in 'Introduction to Concepts', the insights of the performers might be less significant. Some prior knowledge of Hay's process and the concepts of the work allow for us to understand the way that the performers' experiences and observations arise. In this way the site has linear form. We are given access to information in an order that makes it logical and easy to follow, despite the way the site is designed to appear non-linear or discontinuous. This demonstrates a paradox between the apparent fluidity of the site and an underlying motivation to provide the user with specific information. The site's interactive potential seems apparent through its non-linear appearance, which encourages the user to engage actively. However, there are

underlying structures that promote a certain logic, implying that the construction of the site was concerned with ensuring that users are able to make sense of certain ideas and concepts. The site occupies an interesting position, as both opaque and didactic.

Digital Adaptation of *N Time to Fly*

The next set to be encountered features an animated adaptation of *No Time to Fly* by digital artist Amin Weber. The animation can be viewed alongside the text-score, a written account of Durning's experiences and a recording of one of Durning's interpretations. The format allows us to see how each section of the text was interpreted in both danced and animated form. The page also includes filmed excerpts of a conversation between Durning and Weber, in which he discusses his creative process.

The animation consists of continually moving black and white lines, with flashes of colour; they are the visual texture of paint. The lines form a flock of virtual brushstrokes, chasing themselves through space, they gather at times, echoing a body, but never quite reaching a complete mimetic form. The lines collapse into dots, filling the screen, before re-grouping into a headless form. The shapes are never still; collecting, forming, dispersing, they move at an even pace. Slow moments are notable in their rarity.

Interestingly, the animation is set to music. This is in contrast to the danced versions of *No Time to Fly*. Hay states, “I have absolutely no interest in choreographing to music” (2000: 4). The presence of music in the animation draws attention to its absence in the dance. Furthermore, it perhaps helps to emphasise the danced quality of the animation. The presence of music seems to imply a dancing form. Despite the lack of music in the executants’ adaptations, they are not silent. At one point a song is sung; tapping, clicking, walking and breathing all contribute to a soundscape arising from the dance. It is these sounds that form the basis of Weber’s soundtrack (Weber in Motion Bank 2013). They are enhanced and embedded within computerised sound, and only recognisable at a few moments during the animation. The way that Weber uses sounds arising from movement demonstrates how his process is an extension of Hay’s. Despite moving away from her disinterest in music, using sound that arises from the body highlights the presence of the body within the animation.

Weber describes how he started with a series of abstract sketches, but realised that there “has to be a thing or a form that the ability that a body has, that way of behaving” (Weber in Motion Bank 2013). The need for a body reiterates the specific concerns of Hay’s practice. For example the animated structures on *Synchronous Objects* do not behave like bodies. In fact *Synchronous Objects* is explicitly concerned with Forsythe’s interest in expressing choreography *without* the body (2008). However, it seems as though the choreographic principles of Hay’s work could not be portrayed without employing the body as a pivotal concept. The implication of Weber’s approach is that the score cannot be appropriately interpreted without the body, even if the body is to manifest in abstract, digital form.

Despite obvious differences, the animation does share some of the unifying qualities of the danced renditions, referred to in the opening paragraph. It is worth mentioning here that Weber had seen the dancers perform the work multiple times before creating the animation (Weber in Motion Bank 2013). This is arguably evident through the tone of the animation, which is reminiscent of each of the executants' adaptations.⁵⁷ This demonstrates how a non-material feature of Hay's practice is transmittable purely through digital media. But can it count as an instance of the work? Furthermore, how does it relate to the text-score?

It is possible to suggest that the animation is a work of art in its own right. However, this raises identity questions. How does it relate to the text-score, recordings and work? Given that it is a response to Hay's text-score, is Weber's animation a version of *No Time to Fly*? Perhaps it makes sense to think about it as a re-working, allowing for it to be both *No Time to Fly* and a new artwork. Dual - identity of this kind is fairly commonplace within dance. One only has to look at the work of well-known British choreographer Matthew Bourne, to see how dances can be re-worked into new versions, whilst retaining the identity of the original.⁵⁸ However, this sets it apart from the danced adaptations, as it does not seem feasible to consider each of the 21 danced adaptations as individual artworks. But why is this? Margolis (1981) for example suggests that dance is autographic, implicating each performance of a work

⁵⁷ The notion of 'adaptation' is important to Hay's thinking (Hay 2013: 64 – 66). It was adopted by the Motion Bank team to refer to the three versions of the work.

⁵⁸ See *Nutcracker* (1992), *Swan Lake* (1995), *Cinderella* (1997) and *Sleeping Beauty* (2012)

as an individually authored work, however, this view is complicated by the way that we tend to think of performances as different instances of the same thing.

Adopting Goodman's terminology, and using the terms in slightly different way, performance theorist Linden Hill suggests that whilst Hay's text-score is autographic, each interpretation is allographic (2015). Goodman's concern is with the nature of *works*, rather than performances. However, following this line of thought we might also suggest that the animation is equally an allographic instance of the work. But what are the implications of this for *No Time to Fly*? How can it have both autographic and allographic instances? Furthermore, following Margolis we might want to argue that each instance is autographic to the interpreter? Whilst it seems problematic to claim they are new artworks, the use of the term 'adaptation' (Hay and Motion Bank 2013) to describe the interpretations suggests the cultivation of something new, which stands in relation to the work. Hill acknowledges these complexities, pointing to the 'tangled' nature of the score's parts (2015).

Hill argues that *Using the Sky* problematises Goodman's conception of scoring due to the way that it does not specify the essential features of *No Time to Fly*, but highlights the variability between each rendition (2015). However, I suggest that the score does function to capture the essential properties of the work, and that these are revealed as expanded concepts which include metaphysical features, such as variation in performance, as opposed to a reductionist approach, which looks to strip the work to a minimal set of structural requirements. Furthermore, the interpretation of the work in digital form, through Weber's animation demonstrates how the body is

simultaneously central to the work, yet able to be rendered and present in non-fleshy form, thus situating the score within a posthuman framework.

The use of the term ‘adaptations’ arises from Hay’s practice (Hay 2013: 64 – 66).⁵⁹ It implies the potential for change and highlights the role of the executant. The open nature of this terminology suggests that responses to the score might take various forms. Proposing that the animation can count as an instance of the work is perhaps contentious and certainly raises questions about where the edges of the work are. It is possible to argue, as McFee and Carr are likely to, that this cannot constitute a valid instance of the work as it does not involve the human body. However, according to deLahunta (2015), Hay has validated Weber’s animation as a legitimate adaptation of the work, thus further demonstrating its open, multiple and fluid ontological form.

Movement Character

The ‘Movement Character’ page contains multiple visualisations that record the pathways and use of space for each of the dancers by plotting and manipulating information from each adaptation. The diagrams are shown both individually and overlaid in alignment with the score. Users are able to access a visualisation of the ‘convex hull’ of the pathways. The site helpfully explains that, “[a] convex hull is a shape formed by connecting the outmost points of a dataset like a rubber band that is wrapped around it” (Motion Bank 2013).

⁵⁹ See also Foster (2015: 4 – 15) for a discussion of how this notion underpinned Hay’s Solo Performance Commissioning Project.

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Figure 7: (Left) 'Convex Hull' demonstrating Durning's use of space (Motion Bank 2013)

Figure 8: (Right) 'Convex Hull' demonstrating Warby's use of space (Motion Bank 2013)

These diagrams allow us to see how each performer uses space differently by showing the entire space covered. For example, they allow us to see how Durning generally covers a larger area than Warby, reiterating the individuality of the interpretations. We can also see that each performer follows different pathways and covers differently shaped space in each performance. Although small deviations in movement and pathways are, to some extent inevitable with multiple renditions of any work, these diagrams demonstrate fairly large differences — reiterating the inherent variability of the work.

Digital media allows for the realisation of spatial information that is not apparent when only watching the recordings. Although each performer's version is evidently different in terms of movement, the spatial mapping allows us to see difference in more detail. Furthermore, the identity features of the work are foregrounded again. The decision to visualise spatial patterning arguably demonstrates that the

relationship between the dancer and space is a core property of the work. Alternatively, it is possible to argue that the diagrams attribute such features a central role in the identity of the work, by emphasising them in the reading of the work.

During the launch of the score Motion Bank team member Florian Jenett explained how they used Piecemaker to mark significant points in the recordings (2013). The team added points in relation to the text-score, and asked workshop participants to select sections that they thought were important, or where a change occurred. This process allowed for the team to divide the recordings into sections in order to align them with the score. It also provided data for mapping the travel pathways, and convex hull (Jenett 2013). Of the many methods and processes employed by the Motion Bank team during the development of the digital-score, it seems that the analysis of movement with Piecemaker is perhaps the most closely aligned with traditional scoring or notational methods, such as the development of a Labanotation score by deconstructing and plotting movement. However the team focussed on components other than specific movements of the body, reiterating the open nature of the work and suggesting other features, such as the dancer's relationship to space and time, as essential to the work. Importantly, these inscriptions are not intended as tools for instantiation. Although they inscribe features of the work, following the diagrams would not result in an instance of *No Time to Fly*, the performance of which arises from an executant's engagement with Hay's text-score, artistic principles and relationship with their own body. Attributing the relationship between the executant's body and Hay's principles and text-score a fundamental role problematises the previous claim that Weber's animation can be considered an

instance of the work. However, whilst Weber did not interpret this information with his own body, he constructed a digital form, through which he could do so. Furthermore, he did not mimic movement patterns or diagrams therefore the validity of his interpretation arguably arises from his deep engagement with the principles and directives of the work, albeit interpreted through a digital body.

The diagrams derive from the movement of the body; however, this mode of transmitting 'choreographic knowledge' perhaps aligns more closely with the structural approach of *Synchronous Objects*, than Weber's expressive and body-centric framework. Abstracting the behaviour of the body in space and reducing the three-dimensional to a flat, diagrammatic form runs the risk of negating the body's complexity. This is arguably a methodological problem for any form of notating or describing dance, or indeed any moving body.

Hayles identifies two theoretical moves that may help to clarify the relationship between these diagrams and the movement they embody. The first approach is referred to by Hayles as "Platonic backhand" she suggests that this method begins by inferring from the world's multiplicity a simplified abstraction (1999: 12). This seems to describe some traditional methods for notating movement, whereby the dance is abstracted into a simplified diagram, which is used as a tool for re-embodiment. Hayles suggests that a problem occurs when this abstracted version of reality becomes the "originary form", from which multiplicity arises (Hayles 1999: 12), because the multiplicity that results from a simplified abstraction can appear a messy version or a "fuzzing up" (Hayles 1999: 12) of reality, which has come to be

represented in simplified form. Anyone who has attempted to read and enact a Labanotation score may relate to this account. The complexity of activating the body in space can seem to distort the simple 'reality' of the dance on the page.

Hayles' second suggested approach aligns more closely with the diagrams created for *Using the Sky*. She refers to this as "Platonic forehand", suggesting that this method is more recent, as it requires the involvement of powerful computers (1999: 12). Hayles suggests that Platonic forehand also starts from simplified abstractions but that by using simulation techniques such as algorithms, multiplicity is evolved from the abstraction, and that this multiplicity is sufficiently complex to be seen as "a world of its own" (1999: 12). This description relates to the visualisations on *Using the Sky*, which were generated by computers from simple abstractions, and re-configured in order to re-present the multiplicity of the lived experience. This is evident in the way in which the convex hull diagrams of each rendition are overlaid into one diagram, visualising the repetition and multiplicity central to the work's ontology. Further, unlike traditional notations, these diagrams are not intended to function as a tool for re-activation; their complexity demonstrates metaphysical properties of the work, yet it simultaneously limits their practical usefulness. This suggests that such images can be seen as deriving from the body, yet inhabiting a posthuman "world of [their] own" (1999: 12), representing movement, without codifying it. Although the diagrams do not maintain the perceptual presence of the body, considering how they operate under the Platonic forehand framework, it is possible to suggest similarities with the animation. Both approaches abstract the body, and reactivate it through digital media. Each form re-establishes multiplicity, as opposed to existing merely as a

simplified version of 'real' or non-digital world. Considering how digital media extends the body reiterates the centrality of Hay's practice, and the way in which the use of technology expands the concepts of *No Time to Fly*.

These observations imply a posthuman paradigm, however there are some tenants of posthumanism that do not align with a pragmatist framework. It is important to note that the term 'posthuman' refers to a wider project concerned with decentralising the place of the human and questioning the very notion of human beings. Causey (2007) suggests that, "[m]ore recently theorists have figured the model of the posthuman as an artefact of technoculture" (2007: 52). It is specifically this component of the overall posthuman theses that is relevant in this context. Hayles (1999: 3), for example argues for no demarcations between the body and the digital. Whilst this case study demonstrates the potential for interaction between the digital and the flesh, it is important to remember the role of human practices in the cultivation of theoretical perspectives. Whilst digital technology plays an increasing central role in our lives, the distinction between virtual and actual reality is generally maintained. Causey describes the notion as "seductive", but also troubling and faulty (2007: 52). He suggests,

[t]he ideas that our humanness has somehow disappeared or that our bodies are not of the same corruptible flesh as the animals and earthly environments that surround us are dangerous models (Causey 2007: 52).

How then are we to acknowledge the relation between the flesh and the digital without entering into 'dangerous', or at least purely theoretical territory?

Braidotti proposes a more moderate view than Hayles, suggesting that:

[t]he posthuman predicament is such as to force a displacement of the lines of demarcation between structural differences, or ontological categories, for instance between the organic and the inorganic, the born and the manufactured, flesh and metal, electronic circuits and organic nervous systems (Braidotti 2013: 89).

The relationship between shifting boundaries and ontological categories is useful here. Thinking of these distinctions as displaced, as opposed to absolutely resolved is more appropriate in relation to this example. Whilst viewers are able to experience the body and the work through its digital representation, it is not confused, or interchangeable with the work in live form. Whilst posthumanism is a helpful concept for thinking through these relations we need to maintain that the experiences are different.

Summary

There is one set on *Using the Sky* which has not been discussed, 'All Recordings (with Overlays) From April 2011', houses each of the 21 recordings, and 'overlays', in which each executant's recordings are overlaid to form a single rendering. This set further highlights the multiplicity at the heart of the work. There is also a tutorial section on the website, which further demonstrates the educational underpinnings of the site. Whilst these pages are interesting, it seemed pertinent in this chapter to focus in more detail on features of the other four sets.

This chapter has provided an insight into *Using the Sky* and some of the questions it raises. I have discussed the identity questions generated by the multiple interpretations in danced and digital form. I have further suggested that the digital methods respond to Hay's practice by abstracting and re-configuring the body into digital cells. This study has raised key questions about how the digital-score informs the viewer's understanding of *No Time To Fly*. The format of the site leads the user to see certain components of the work, which informs its identity. This leads to a tension that raises the questions that are at the heart of this thesis regarding the interplay between perception and ontology.

Considering how the text-score and recordings inter-relate it is possible to suggest that knowledge of Hay's practice not only enhances appreciation of the work, but is essential to full appreciation.⁶⁰ The introspective nature of Hay's practice means that the movement alone is perhaps challenging to observe. For the most part, the dancers do not follow recognisable aesthetic forms. Viewing the movement alongside the information presented on the digital-score encourages a reading of the work that aligns with Hay's principles. This serves to clarify Hay's intention, while simultaneously foregrounding the potential difficulty of reading the work in performance alone. Hill (2015) suggests that the autonomy of the user to choose their path through the site aligns with Hay's beliefs about giving the dancer more agency, rather than forcing her to realise a pre-conceived piece of choreography. Whilst I agree that the site echoes the principles of Hay's practice in a variety of ways, I also

⁶⁰ This claim relates to the concept of 'aesthetic empiricism' mentioned in Chapter One (p.23).

suggest that both the site and the choreography are pre-conceived, that the seemingly open nature of the score relies upon detailed orchestration, and that, as previously suggested, the user's experience is more tightly choreographed by the Motion Bank team than perhaps is initially apparent.

The claim that access to Hay's intention enhances the user's ability to interpret and appreciate the work raises many questions about meaning, understanding, value and intention. For example, there are well-documented debates in the philosophy of art and literature about the significance of the author's intention. Philosophers such as Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946) and Barthes (1977) claim that the intention of the author is entirely insignificant. Others, such as McFee believe that whilst it might be helpful at times, the work should speak for itself (2011: 120 - 152). Debates about artistic intention tend to focus on matters of meaning and interpretation. However, the issue here is slightly different. The non-representational nature of Hay's work means that understanding the work does not rely upon comprehension of Hay's intended *meaning*. However, the ambiguous nature of the work means that to fully appreciate the work audiences arguably require some information about the motivation of the movement, which begins with Hay and is transmitted to the dancers, who bring their own responses to the work.

The claim that knowledge of Hay's process is essential for the adequate interpretation and full appreciation of *No Time to Fly* demonstrates a similarity with *Synchronous Objects* and is problematic for a variety of reasons. Importantly, the work was made, performed and presumably valued prior to the development of *Using the Sky*. Having

accessed the work for the first time through *Using the Sky*, it is hard to imagine fully appreciating *No Time to Fly* without the information offered through the score. However, this is not necessarily the case for those who have seen the work in live form first. This demonstrates the way in which the audience's conceptions of the work may be altered by the digital-score and therefore the identity of the work might be changed. This leads to further questions about the nature of dance works. A platonist is likely to argue that the work cannot acquire or lose properties, although a spectator's interpretation might change over time. However, a perspective such as mine, which sees dance works as intrinsically linked to human practices, implies that if cultural readings of a work evolve, the identity of the work becomes different. Ontological tensions such as these are at the heart of this research as I go on to theorise the philosophical implications of 'choreographic objects'. Before moving into the more abstract examination of the objects, the following chapter describes and analyses the third and final case study, *A Choreographer's Score: Fase, Rosas danst Rosas, Elena's Aria, Bartók*, returning to the central questions concerning the analytic and philosophical frameworks, and the way in which the work is rendered and re-presented through 'choreographic objects'.

Chapter Eight: *A Choreographer's Score: Fase, Rosas danst Rosas, Elena's Aria, Bartók*

Introduction

This chapter considers *A Choreographer's Score: Fase, Rosas danst Rosas, Elena's Aria, Bartók* (*A Choreographer's Score*) (2012), which documents four of Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker's works from the beginning of her career in the 1980s. This is the first of three scores co-authored with Cvejić. The score is described by Cvejić as having multiple functions and motivations, including helping to "take dance more seriously" (in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 8), and offering a form of authorial poetics (in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 8). This chapter outlines the format, appearance, intentions and methods of the score, drawing comparisons with previous case studies and analytic frameworks. I provide an overview of some of the philosophical questions posed by the score regarding meaning, authorship and ontology.

Discussing *A Choreographer's Score* alongside *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky* requires some qualification. They are described as belonging to the same emerging form of dance literature (deLahunta 2012), share many motivations and similarly problematise the nature of scoring outlined in Chapter One.⁶¹ Whilst theses similarities are sufficient to warrant their shared titling as 'choreographic objects', there are also many differences between them. One of the difficulties of discussing

⁶¹ Such as those previously discussed from McFee (2011), Van Imschoot (2010) and Hutchinson Guest (2000).

‘choreographic objects’ is that each example is unique. *A Choreographer’s Score* for example, is different to *Synchronous Objects* and *Using The Sky*, firstly because it does not arise from Motion Bank. Secondly, it does not exist online, thirdly it must be purchased, and lastly it does not use very advanced technology.

This chapter draws comparisons between the objects. However, prior to this it seems necessary to outline the common characteristics between the three scores in order to understand their relationships, validate the decision to compare them, and justify the generalising of claims made in relation to this case study. The first thing that links these three objects together is that each of them is referred to as a ‘score’. One of the motivations of this research is to gain and articulate a clear understanding of the ontology of these scores, and their relationship to other scoring practices. Identifying commonalities may help to shed light on the notion of the score under the broader rubric of the ‘choreographic object’. Common characteristics that I have identified so far include that each of the scores is co - authored, in collaboration with researchers and technologists. This is in contrast to other process-oriented publications,⁶² such as Burrow’s book *A Choreographer’s Handbook* (2010), for example, which is written by Burrows alone. Whilst Forsythe, Hay and De Keersmaeker are central to the development of the scores, they are authored and curated by at least two, and often a larger team of people, from various disciplines and perspectives. An important similarity is that each maps a single work. Whilst some ‘choreographic objects’, such as *Improvisational Technologies* (Forsythe 2009) and *Material for the Spine* (Paxton 2008) offer enquiries into specific methods and techniques, these three scores focus

⁶² This group of publications is clearly delineated by deLahunta (2013a).

on individual works. Another common characteristic is that the scores aim to gain and share a deeper understanding of the works than is accessible in performance alone. In relation to this aim, each score uses visualisation methods to demonstrate features of choreography that are not visible in live performance. Lastly, none of the scores is intended for the re-instantiation or re-interpretation of the work.

Motivations and Methods

Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker trained at MUDRA in Belgium in the late 1970s, and Tisch School of the Arts in New York in the early 1980s where she choreographed her first work *Asch* (Rosas n.d.). After making her second work, *Fase* in 1982, De Keersmaecker founded her own company, Rosas, in 1983, which has become one of the most well-known contemporary dance companies in Europe. In 1995 De Keersmaecker established the Performing Arts Research and Training Studios (P.A.R.T.S.) in Brussels. She continues to make works and run the company and the studios. *A Choreographer's Score* documents De Keersmaecker's "early works" (Cvejić in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 8). These are *Fase* (1982) *Rosas danst Rosas* (1983), *Elena's Aria* (1984), and *Bartók* (1987). This chapter concentrates on *Rosas danst Rosas*, although the methods and approach to the documentation and analysis of the object of study are applied to each of the works in the score.

Rosas danst Rosas is arguably one of De Keersmaecker's most widely known works. For example, UK dance critic Jenny Gilbert suggested in 2009 that the work still,

stands as her company's signature, not least because it has been hailed far and wide as a kinetic primer on contemporary creative process (Gilbert 2009).

The work premiered in the Kaaaitheater in Brussels in 1983, and remains part of the Rosas repertoire. It was most recently performed in Leipzig in 2015 (Rosas n.d.). A film version of the work was made in 1997 by Thierry De Mey, a long-term collaborator of De Keersmaecker's, who also composed the music for the original work alongside Peter Vermeersch (Rosas n.d.).

As previously mentioned, the score consists of a book and four DVDs. These are presented in a white cardboard sleeve. The front of the sleeve includes only the title of the score in print. The reverse includes a summary of contents in small black text and a black and white picture of De Keersmaecker next to a diagram that appears to be drawn on a blackboard. The aesthetic of the box is in stark contrast to the complex digital images of

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Figure 9: The cover of *A Choreographer's Score* (De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012)

Synchronous Objects. It sets the tone of the publication, which is detailed and sincere. The presence of the chalkboard implies a sense of history and tradition, a riposte to the virtual, perhaps.

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Figure 10: The Cover of *Choreographer's Score* (De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012)

As shown in Figure 10 the covers of the book and accompanying DVDs present matching red diagrams. Close inspection reveals that this image consists of two unbroken lines, which travel backwards and forwards on a complex, repetitious pathway. The sense of movement is generated by small arrows, which indicate directionality and travel. These arrows demonstrate to the reader that the images are not abstract; they are

representations of movement in space. This level of detail is typical of many of the diagrams within the score.

In the Introduction to the score Cvejić outlines the motivations and aims of the project. It becomes quickly apparent to the reader that understanding the analytic method and framework is important. This is due to the way in which Cvejić and De Keersmaeker formulated an idiosyncratic methodology in order to analyse the works. Cvejić explains how the project arose after De Keersmaeker explained in 2012 that she would be reviving these works, and that it would be the last time that she would dance in them. Paraphrasing De Keersmaeker, Cvejić explains how the choreographer

went on to ask; “[i]s this an occasion to write these choreographies down?” (Cvejić in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 7). The presentation of these four works together is significant, as it demonstrates the early progression of De Keersmaeker’s choreographic approach (Cvejić in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 7).

Cvejić suggests that, “[t]hese four works introduce four lines that run through more than forty choreographies De Keersmaeker has made to this day” (in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 7). This approach demonstrates a way of thinking about the works that moves beyond formal and structuralist models of analysis, such as those discussed in Chapter Six (pp.149 – 150). It outlines a desire to generate an understanding of the relationship between the works, an approach perhaps aligned with the post-structuralist notion of ‘intertextuality’ (Kristeva 1980). As discussed in Chapter Two (pp.46 – 47), this perspective originated in linguistics and suggests — contra to structuralist and semiotic approaches — that meaning is generated by the way that texts refer to one another. Intertextuality proposes that works, or texts consists of multiple references to other texts, and that recognising these references helps the reader to determine meanings and generate interpretations (Adshead Lansdale 1999).

The intertextual framework of *A Choreographer’s Score* contrasts with *Synchronous Objects*, which is set within a predominantly structuralist paradigm and is therefore primarily concerned with the organisational features of the choreographic act, as opposed to the relationship between such acts and other texts. *Synchronous Objects* adopts multiple disciplinary frameworks, which arguably cultivates multiple texts,

however each focuses solely to *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, reinforcing the structuralist paradigm. In contrast, *A Choreographer's Score* frequently refers to the relationships between the four works, as demonstrated by Cvejić's articulation about these early works and subsequent choreographies. Furthermore, the score considers external and causal factors, such as the De Keersmaecker's influences, collaborations and so on. This encourages a reading of the work that acknowledges its broad cultural significance, and establishes its place within De Keersmaecker's *oeuvre*.

Cvejić outlines the well- documented complexities of notating, recording and writing (about) dance, suggesting that,

in comparison to music, visual arts, theater and cinema, dance suffers from a significant lack of self-reflective writing that would illuminate choreography as an authorial poetics (Cvejić in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 8).

Here Cvejić articulates a perspective that, as she points out, is also addressed by Forsythe's projects (Cvejić in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 7), however other scholars in different contexts also address the issue. For example, in 2006 Susan Melrose suggested that, "[e]xpert composition remains a curiously under-theorised notion in expert performance-making, despite the interest in composition" (2006: 1).

It seems that a perceived lack of theoretical reflection is a motivational force for the publication of 'choreographic objects'. For example, Cvejić goes on to suggest that,

[t]his may be said more bluntly: in order for dance to be "taken seriously", it needs to take itself seriously. The more we, *amateurs de danse* and scholars, can learn from choreographers and dancers about their notions and methods, the more complex our experiences and thoughts will be [...]. (Cvejić in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 8).

This claim offers an opinion that the political and cultural value of dance is related to accessing 'choreographic thinking' (Forsythe 2008). This is a topic discussed by Leach (2013), who points out that 'choreographic objects' arise from cultural contexts that place high value on knowledge. The implication of this claim is that the expert knowledge of the choreographer might enhance viewers' experience of the work. Melrose suggests that 'expert practitioners' see dances - even those choreographed by others - in a different way to other spectators (2009: 24).

A Choreographer's Score, alongside *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky*, can be understood as an attempt to share and encourage expert ways of seeing. This desire is not new, as long ago as 1988 Adshead *et al* suggested that their dance analysis model provided a way to educate spectators as to what is happening in a dance, acknowledging a lack of literature in this regard (1988: 5). However, more recently the focus has shifted towards the practitioner, as projects such as *A Choreographer's Score* encourage readers and spectators to see the dance through the eyes of the choreographer. De Keersmaecker is central to *A Choreographer's Score*, meaning that users are engaging with her way of conceptualising the dance. This feature is less

immediately apparent in the case of *Synchronous Objects* as there are no films of Forsythe, although he contributes written and spoken text, furthermore, the interactive tools can be seen to allow the user autonomy to construct their own experiences of the choreography. However, the site has been very carefully curated in accordance with Forsythe's intentions. For example, the decision to look at counterpoint, as opposed any other component, such as the rhythmic organisation of the movement for instance, focuses the user on specific, structural features of the work.

Cvejić acknowledges the questions posed by the resituating of the author's voice, suggesting that,

[i]t would be a premodern regression to argue for the ontological priority of the choreographer's insight as a kind of first-hand knowledge in relation to theoretical "second-hand" readings (Cvejić in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 8).

However she remains confident that self-reflective choreographic writing will enhance appreciation and understanding of dance. This claim reiterates the way in which these objects offer a new form of dance scoring. As with *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky*, this publication is not intended for reinterpretation or reconstruction (Cvejić in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 18), however, it does provide a highly detailed account of the works' structures and De Keersmaecker's process. In a review of the score, dance scholar and practitioner Simon Ellis describes it as, "obsessed with process; it's the full monty of the history and underlying structures of these works" (2013: 219). Its motivation lies in the analysis of

choreographic structures and processes, and the dissemination of ‘choreographic knowledge’.

Similarly to Forsythe, Cvejić articulates a distinction between dancing and choreography. She explains how she searched for the most appropriate methods for extracting the choreography from the dancing (in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 9). This is a similar quandary to those faced by the Motion Bank team. However, although the motivations are similar, the methods are very different. Whilst Motion Bank opted for digital annotation techniques and creative programming in order to explore the potential of digital media for illuminating difficult to see phenomenon (Motion Bank 2013), Cvejić and De Keersmaeker’s approach is more analogue.

Cvejić explains how the score was devised over the following four stages. First she examined all available documents about the given work, including recordings, live performances, (where possible), notebooks containing sketches, drawings and notes, programmes, letters, budgets, reviews, technical lists and many more types of document including personal diary entries and letters. Cvejić suggests that these ‘archaeological’ findings gave her clues as to what was invisible in the work alone (in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 10). This articulation points to another similarity with *Using The Sky* and *Synchronous Objects*, which use visualisation techniques to expose the structures and relationships present in the work, which are not visible in performance, or are perhaps visible only to the ‘expert practitioner’, to borrow Melrose’s term (2006). However, Cvejić and De Keersmaeker do not appear to share

Forsythe's desire to explore the various ways that choreographic principles can be expressed without the body. Unlike Forsythe's research, this score does not offer abstract renderings of the choreography. Rather it uses verbal, written, diagrammatic and archival methodologies to provide as much information about the work as possible.

To prepare for stage two of the method Cvejić used her examination of the resources to draft questions for her first interview with De Keersmaeker. She describes this as, "a dialogue where De Keersmaeker and I try to lay out the work and all that constitutes it" (Cvejić in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 11). Cvejić explains how De Keersmaeker drew diagrams on a blackboard to illustrate her points, and often demonstrated by dancing (in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 11). These initial interviews informed the development of the second interviews, which follow a script and are organised into sections, according to theme (Cvejić in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 11-12). These interviews form the basis of the DVD component of the score. They are intended to be viewed alongside the book, to visually demonstrate certain points or ideas (Cvejić in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 18). Following the second interview the next stage of the method involved "mapping out the score" (Cvejić in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 12), which involved plotting and illustrating the work through notes and photos. These sources are accompanied by text, which was composed by Cvejić from the transcripts of both interviews and was then re-edited in collaboration with De Keersmaeker (Cvejić in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 12). Cvejić explains how the selections of materials were made: "We were constantly evaluating the material on the basis of whether it provides tools to analyse

the choreography” (Cvejić in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 12). Thus, reiterating the central analytic concern of the score. This methodology was applied to each of the four works, resulting in four micro-scores within the larger score.

The *Rosa danst Rosas* Score

The *Rosas danst Rosas* score starts with an introduction to the work taken from the interview transcripts. De Keersmaeker outlines the multiple meanings of the title, suggesting that it points to the way in which the dancers in *Rosas* dance themselves in the work. She points out that the repetition of the title refers to a key component of the work (De Keersmaeker in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012). The centrality of repetition becomes apparent as De Keersmaeker outlines the complex structure of the

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work. In the book these explanations are illustrated by hand drawn diagrams and photographs, which help the reader to understand the rules and forms of organisation that constitute the work.

Figure 11: De Keersmaeker's notes demonstrating the structure of *Rosas danst Rosas* (De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 83)

Rosas danst Rosas consists of four acts or “movements” (De Keersmaeker in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012), each of which is addressed in detail. Each section deconstructs the choreographic material, structure and relations present within that particular movement. For example, the section that considers the first movement starts with a discussion of how the choreography in this movement arises from one basic phrase (De Keersmaeker in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 86). Readers are directed to the correlating section on the DVD, where De Keersmaeker uses the chalkboard to explain how the phrase is made up of five sections, labelled: A,B,C,D and E. She suggests that each part of the phrase can be danced in two different ways, either with attack, or with a slow and suspended dynamic (De Keersmaeker in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012).

De Keersmaeker goes on to explain how these phrases are used in the work, outlining the number of dancers performing each one during every section of the first movement. For example phrase A may be completed at a ratio of 3:1, with three dancers performing A in unison, whilst one dancer performs phrase B. De Keersmaeker outlines the entire movement in this way, explaining how the phrases are repeated throughout at various times and in both dynamic states. This allows the reader and spectator to see how counterpoint arises, and to understand the logic behind the repetitious structuring of the movement material.

The approach both demonstrates and generates complexity. The detailed accounts of structure in written and audio-visual form are hard to follow if one is trying to visualise the dance. A potential reason for this is that the entire movement is

described without referring to the vocabulary of the body. Denoting the movement material merely as section A, for example, does not help the reader to formulate an image of the work. The dancing is not present. The shapes, aesthetics and specific behaviours of the body are not referred to, thus demonstrating Cvejić's desire to extract the choreography from the dancing. The result of this is that watching and listening to De Keersmaeker outline the structure of the work bears no resemblance to the experience of watching *Rosas danst Rosas*.

However, these sections are interspersed with clips of recordings of the work in performance and the film version. These allow the viewer to see how the dancers enact the structure. As De Keersmaeker narrates these sections, her tone changes. She speaks softly and slowly, as though not wanting to overshadow the movement. This observation relates to Cvejić's suggestion in the Introduction that,

the video demonstrates the movement that can't be described enough, but has to be performed. The choreographer's *parole* fleshes out the account with affective tones of storytelling that the text is numb to (Cvejić in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 12).

The clips allow the dancing to be reinstated, helping the reader to appreciate the complexity of the seemingly simple dance. The aesthetics and methods of the score are reflective of De Keersmaeker's minimal choreographic style. The design highlights the idiosyncratic nature of the method, and the relevance of the artists' 'signature' practices (Melrose 2009) in these scores. The aesthetics certainly inform the overall project, perhaps contributing to Ellis's summary of the score as, "beautiful, thorough (without going too deep) and captivating" (2013: 220).

Ellis suggests that Cvejić missed the opportunity to probe De Keersmaeker, and ask in-depth questions about her decision making process (2013: 219). Rather, the excavation of the work focuses primarily on historical and structural features, through which features of De Keersmaeker's process are made clear. Multiple forms of archival materials, including extracts from De Keersmaeker's notebooks, a funding application and various reviews are included in the publication.

Cvejić suggests that the inclusion of archival material as appendices provides,

a glimpse into the long working processes and the resonances and layers that the work accumulated throughout their reception over three decades (Cvejić in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 12).

This points to two more of the central concerns, first to demonstrate process and secondly to reveal how the work has accrued intertextual meanings and cultural significance. Cvejić suggests that, "A Choreographer's Score makes the ecriture of choreography graphic" (in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 18), using a term from deconstruction methodologies to point to the inter-related and textual nature of the choreography.

Intertextual Relations

Intertextual relations are highlighted throughout the score as De Keersmaeker recalls the influences that informed the work, including Charlie Chaplin and punk music (in De

Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 82). Cvejić asks how influences from De Keersmaecker's predecessors in minimal dance, such as Judson artists Lucinda Childs and Trisha Brown, may have inspired the work (in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 85). De Keersmaecker responds that at the time of making *Rosas danst Rosas* she had not seen the work of Judson Dance Theater,⁶³ explaining how she did see Childs' work at some stage, but that it did not affect her, and that it was Wilson and Glass's *Einstein on the Beach* (1976) that left a lasting impression (De Keersmaecker in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 85).

De Keersmaecker explicitly articulates the relationship between the choreographic structure and cultural reference points. For example, the transcript reads:

The structural framework demands that you physically throw yourself against a wall. I remember I associated it with the machine from Kafka's "In der Strafkolonie" ("The Penal Colony"); going beyond the pain to the verge of ecstasy (De Keersmaecker in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 82).

This type of information encourages the reader to consider *Rosas danst Rosas* in relation to other cultural texts, highlighting the way in which meaning arises through such connections. This approach both extends and limits readings of *Rosas danst Rosas*. As Cvejić suggests, learning about the process of choreography allows the reader and spectator to experience the layers that are not perceptible in performance alone (in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 8). However, this account of the

⁶³ As discussed in the Chapter Two (pp.33 – 34), Judson Dance Theater were an influential avant-garde movement collective, working in New York in the 1960s. See Banes (1983) and Burt (2006) for detailed considerations of their work.

intertextual relations also limits the potential for a wide-array of readings as it frames experiences of the work in accordance with De Keersmaeker's experiences and intentions. For example, suggesting that she was not affected by Childs' practice encourages a correct and incorrect way of reading the work.

De Keersmaeker's framing of the work is further demonstrated by her discussion of the role of silence. Speaking on the DVD ⁶⁴ she suggests that the contrast between noise and silence helps the audience to listen (in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012). This is demonstrated by a recording that presents a section of the work in which the dancers stand still, with their backs to the audience whilst loud, mechanical music is played. De Keersmaeker explains, "[w]hen the music stops. We fall" (in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012). She continues as the music stops, "[a] simple action of falling, going from verticality to horizontality" (De Keersmaeker in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012); her final word correlates exactly with the dancers' unison descent from standing to lying. 'Which is quite unexpected' (De Keersmaeker in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012) she states.

Paradoxically, in this context the fall is entirely expected as it is framed through the narration of the movement. This offers an entirely different experience than seeing the work without narration. Furthermore, although the commentary does not continue for the entire clip, the framing encourages the viewer to notice the contrast and attend 'appropriately' when watching the work. The issue of correct and incorrect

⁶⁴ Although, as previously mentioned the discussion on the DVD is also articulated in writing.

readings is addressed in the score. For example, Cvejić suggests that the movements and gestures that constitute the work “are performed with a pronounced feminine character” (in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 85). Indeed, gender seems to be a prominent theme in many readings of the work.⁶⁵ Yet, De Keersmaecker responds to this suggestion as follows:

True, but it was never our strategy or desire to manifest such an attitude. I must say I even had an allergic reaction whenever people referred to it. We wanted everything to stay close to ourselves, and since we were women, it was “Rosas danst Rosas” – we dance ourselves. So we did what we had to do and expressed what seemed natural and close to us, and was not external (De Keersmaecker in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 85).

Understanding De Keersmaecker’s intentions not to represent certain ideas, or replicate cultural ideas affects how the reader understands and perceives the work and limits the potential for mis-reading.

Whilst Cvejić suggests that understanding the intentions of the choreographer does not take “ontological priority” (in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 8) these examples highlight the complexity of the relationship between intention and ontology. Do readings that do not align with De Keersmaecker’s fail to truly experience the work? Are the work’s essential features therefore determined solely by De Keersmaecker? Such questions demonstrate how these objects reframe philosophical questions

⁶⁵ See Jennings (2009) and Brown (2009).

around authorship, meaning and intention that have been addressed from both Analytic and Continental philosophy for many years.⁶⁶

Melrose suggests that traditional modes of documentation and archiving prioritise the product over the process (2006: 1). *A Choreographer's Score, Using The Sky* and *Synchronous Objects* can be seen as a response to the situation. However, Melrose's point is made in relation to the question of 'finishing' the work, implying that the documentation of a finished work may be an inappropriate way of thinking about dance practice (2006: 1). Indeed the desire to maintain the fluid nature of dance works might be a contributing factor to the current interest in process. However, *A Choreographer's Score* both centralises process and presents a finished work. The fact that it is not intended for reconstruction or re-working means that this score is not a tool to enable the four works to continue to be remade. In this sense the score is archival and the wealth of detail stabilises the work. Cvejić describes the score as, "an attempt to comprehend everything that the choreographer considers constituent of the four works examined here" (in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 8). This aim implies that the score offers, or at least aims to offer a complete account of a finished work. This suggests that the score steadies the work, meaning it will not evolve through time, or at least demonstrating a desire to resist such an occurrence.

De Keersmaecker's score seemingly fixes readings of the work in accordance with her intentions. However, there is an important counter-argument to consider. Whilst the

⁶⁶ The role authorship in matters of meaning is addressed by Barthes (1977), Carroll (1992) Foucault (1984), Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946) amongst others.

structural features and influences may remain, the meaning and significance of both De Keersmaecker's views and the work are able to evolve and change over time, despite their stabilisation in print. For example, learning of De Keersmaecker's resistance to representation outlined previously may draw to mind various associations that have no causal relationship to the work. For example the articulations about the work remind me of Nigel Thrift's theory of non-representation (2008). Thrift argues against notions of representation, offering an account of the world, which rests upon the notion that "encounters are all there is, and their results cannot be pre-given" (2008:2). Thrift's phenomenological stance aligns him with scholars such as Manning (2006, 2013) who is similarly concerned with cultivating an account of being that acknowledges what Thrift refers to as, "the lived immediacy of actual experience, before any reflection on it" (2008: 6). He uses dance as an example of this immediacy, and an experience that is essentially non-representational, he states:

For my purposes dance is important; it engages the whole of the senses in bending time and space into new kinaesthetic shapes, taps into the long and variegated history of the unleashing of performance, leads us to understand movement as a potential, challenges the privileging of meaning (especially by understanding the body as being expressive without being a signifier) (Thrift 2008: 14).

Although he talks in general terms, here Thrift articulates a very specific conception of dance,⁶⁷ which does not necessarily relate to all forms of choreographed movement, many of which are planned, representational and dependent upon the body adopting

⁶⁷ This view is reflected in Noë's recent work on choreography (2015)

the role of a signifier.⁶⁸ Therefore, there are many things to be said about Thrift's use of dance to illustrate his ideas, but what is of particular interest here is the way in which De Keersmaeker suggests that her work is non-representational, as though this is not a usual feature of dance performance, which relates to Thrift's claim about the nature of dance.

Importantly, this discussion and the association with Thrift's theory arises from my analysis of the score. The example demonstrates how intertextual meaning and significance are not limited to the intentions of the author. Furthermore, it shows how understanding intention has the potential to ignite further associations, hence justifying Melrose's (2009) suggestion that there will be various modes of reading, dependent on the level of relevant knowledge of the spectator. Perhaps it is possible to suggest that although the work is fixed by the score the meaning and significance of it, as with any artwork, will evolve and change over time. However, the question is posed; how much can the meaning of a work evolve and change? Furthermore, how does this impact on the ontology of the work? This is a particularly relevant question when considering 'choreographic objects', as they appear to cultivate 'stable' versions of the works, fixing the identity in accordance with the intentions of the choreographers. Adopting an ontology positioning that suggests dance works are essentially linked to human perceptions and practices, means that 'choreographic objects' facilitate changes in the identity of work, but that they cannot entirely fix it, as readings will continue to evolve alongside changing cultural contexts.

⁶⁸ Interestingly Noë's argument (2015) that choreography is philosophy adopts a similar conception of dancing, but relies upon the notion that choreography is necessarily representational.

The stabilisation of the work has arguably been a particularly pertinent concern of De Keersmaeker in recent years. In 2011, *Rosas danst Rosas* gained international attention after pop star Beyoncé Knowles used some of the material from the second movement of the work in her music video for the song *Countdown* (Knowles 2011). De Keersmaeker accused Knowles of stealing (Gardner 2011). The case reiterates the ontological instability of dance works, and raised multiple practical and philosophical questions around ownership, authorship and copyright.⁶⁹ What is particularly significant in the context of this discussion is that this event predated the publication of the score. Cvejić suggests that De Keersmaeker initiated the project in 2010 (2012: 7), so the events are not explicitly related, however, it is possible to suggest that the production of the score can be seen as an active attempt to constrain the identity of the work by providing a first-hand account of exactly what the work is, and to closely tie the work to De Keersmaeker.

Following this line of thought, it is interesting to note that in 2013 De Keersmaeker published a detailed account of the material from the second movement as part of the *Re: Rosas* project, developed with FABULOUS.⁷⁰ Contrasting De Keersmaeker's outrage at Knowles's use of the work, this project sees De Keersmaeker and Rosas dancer Samantha van Wissen provide a detailed account of the movement structure and vocabulary, encouraging users to develop and record their own versions of the work. Unlike *A Choreographer's Score*, and despite using video recording as opposed to

⁶⁹ As discussed by Yeoh (2013).

⁷⁰ See <http://www.rosasdanstrosas.be/en-home/>

notation, *Re:Rosas* has similarities to a notated score, insomuch as it breaks down the components of the movement specifically to allow re-instantiation. It actively encourages re-interpretations and variations, therefore raising familiar ontological questions, posed in the previous chapter in relation to *Using the Sky* (pp. 176 – 178), such as; is each version an instance of *Rosas danst Rosas*? How many changes can be made to the movement before it becomes another work entirely? What are the essential features of the work? And who is the choreographer of each version? Nonetheless, this example offers an interesting contrast to *A Choreographer's Score* and demonstrates De Keersmaecker's increased interest in scoring and sharing her work, as well as her heightened authorial presence.

Summary

Although *A Choreographer's Score* does not utilise technology in the same way as the other two scores, the DVD component plays a central role. The visual and aural presence of De Keersmaecker serves to ensure her place in the legacy of the work and the function and affect of the score is dependent upon this feature. Furthermore, as with *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky* the dance has been transformed into digital data, whilst this is not shared via computation in this instance, it has the potential to be, as the information exists in the same, digital form as *One Flat Thing, reproduced* and *No Time to Fly*.

As with *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky* this score can be analysed through frameworks derived from linguistic theory, but this time to promote an intertextual

reading of the works that moves beyond the closed structure of the choreography to a conception of the works as essentially linked to their context of production.

Building on the observations and comparisons made in this chapter, the following one returns to discussions about the nature of dance scores, asking how the 'choreographic objects' discussed in the previous three chapters relate to, and problematise the conceptions of dance scores outlined in Chapter One.

Chapter Nine: Scores Revisited and Revised

Introduction

In 'How To Take Dance Seriously' (2013), cultural theorist Katja Čičigoj suggests that *A Choreographer's Score* poses a challenge to what she describes as "essentialist" and "normative" modes of dance notation, referring to Ann Hutchinson Guest as an example of someone whose work demonstrates such an approach (2013: 108). Whilst some 'choreographic objects' such as *TWO* (Motion Bank and Miller and Hauert 2013) and *Double Skin/Double Mind* (Emio Greco|PC 2004) use standardised notation systems as a point of departure, the three scores discussed here offer alternative modes of inscription. Furthermore, they have different motivations to notated scores. Whereas standardised notational methods are intended to record the minutiae of the movement to allow for faithful or 'authentic' reconstruction, *A Choreographer's Score*, *Using The Sky* and *Synchronous Objects* are study objects, intended to inform the reading, as opposed to the dancing of the work.

In this chapter I return to the observation that despite the wide usage of the term 'score' in dance practice, there seems to be a consensus amongst both philosophical aestheticians and performance studies scholars,⁷¹ that scores have a direct relationship to practice. In McFee's terms they are seen to operate either as a record, a 'recipe' or both (2011: 52 – 69), a sentiment partially echoed, albeit in alternative terms, by Van Imschoot's observation that scores instigate praxis (2010), implying action on the behalf of the user. It seems fair to suggest that although the way that

⁷¹ See Birringer (2013) and Van Imschoot (2010).

the term is used is very broad, it generally refers to a set of instructions or parameters - that may or may not be written down - which documents, underlies and instigates action. Dance scores are generally considered to provide a way into movement, and/or to instigate the performance of a *specific* practice or dance work.

These three objects do not entirely contradict this conception of the score, but they do extend it inasmuch as they do not provide tools for movement but are also not merely “records” (McFee 2011: 52 - 69). Rather, they focus on articulating the processes and intentions of the choreographer, revealing features of the work, and providing a place for self-reflection, expression and analysis. These case studies differ in methods, aims and politics from conventional frameworks, and re-pose some well-versed philosophical questions regarding the potential of documentation to capture or stabilise the elusive ‘work’.

The lack of universal scoring methods means that the relationship between dance works, performances and scores is not straightforward. Various conceptual maps can be visualised between the abstract work, multiple performances, and the permanent physical document. *Using the Sky* is a good example of how this complexity is increased with the construction of ‘choreographic objects’, as the presence of two scores, and the situating of the text-score within the digital score adds further layers to the puzzle and offers forth all kinds of geometric re-configurations. Furthermore, the presence of multiple recordings adds another layer of ontological density. One is now faced with the task of conceptualising relationships between the abstract work, numerous ephemeral performances, multiple permanent representations, the text-

score and the digital-score. The fact that many of these components are dependent upon one another further complicates the psychological mapping. This chapter starts to consider these relations and examines the score-status of the case studies, considering how they relate to and problematise even an expanded conception of dance scores.

Dance and Notation

To a greater or lesser degree, dance works differ in each instantiation, a situation that poses ontological questions, such as; how many changes can occur before it is a new work altogether? And, which features must be present in a performance for it to count as a genuine instance of the work? As previously discussed (p.8 and pp. 84 - 89) Goodman (1976) proposes that these questions can at least theoretically, be resolved by demanding compliance to a notated score, thus offering a tidy solution to the issue. This perspective rests upon the claim that dance works have the potential to be fully indicated through the inscription of a specific movement structure. In Chapter Four I outline some of the problematics with this view, including the vague nature of the term 'notation'. The three case studies further challenge the relevance of standardised notational systems. None of the scores presented are concerned with the documentation of particular movements. Rather they demonstrate an approach that considers a wider range of components including the choreographer's process and intentions, the experiences of the dancers, the structure, the choreographic devices, the use of space and so on. So, leaving aside for the moment the vague nature of the word, what does this say about the notationality of dance?

In the case of *Using the Sky* the methodologies used can perhaps be seen as a response to the “open” (Rubidge 2000a: 7) nature of *No Time to Fly*. Open works that enable very different interpretations are not amenable to movement notation. As demonstrated previously *No Time to Fly* may, and indeed should, look different in each performance, therefore notating a single version would not record the work. However, it is not the case that any performance can be an instance of *No Time to Fly*. The work is constrained through Hay’s practice. Instantiating the work depends upon the interpreter developing a close relationship with Hay’s movement philosophy and principles, alongside the text-score. Thus the work is indicated through concepts expressed in language and practice, as opposed to a notated movement structure. This feature is made clear through *Using the Sky* and is arguably true of other open works, which may be instanced through following ideas, prompts, rules or instructions. Of course such works take many forms, and it is not necessarily the case that language and practice are responsible for determining identity in all cases, thus pointing further towards a conceptualisation of (at least some) dance practices as not, even theoretically, amenable to notation. However, what is significant here is that the non-notationality of open works does not mean that they are non-constrained,

Furthermore it is not only open works that do not align with the traditional view of notationality. Concept focused choreography provides another example of work that does not succumb to notation. For example, Bel’s *Shirtology* (1997), mentioned briefly in Chapter Five (p.113), involves a solo male performer slowly removing a series of jumpers with various logos on them. Each time one is removed, another logo

is revealed. The repeated movement is not un-choreographed, however if one wanted to re-instantiate the work, merely repeating the movement structure would not be sufficient. Equally, notating the movement would not capture any of the essential characteristics of the work, such as the costumes, the performance quality, and the concept. This approach to choreography generates works that are not constrained by movement, but rather through the demonstration of an idea, or the posing of a philosophical question. Perhaps seen as a continuation of an approach adopted by choreographers of Judson Dance Theatre, choreography that is constrained by ideas as opposed to movement has had a notable presence in the USA and Europe over the past six decades. Bel and his contemporaries use stillness, parody and cultural referencing to critique dance's perceived ontological dependence on movement (Lepecki 2006: 1-18). As discussed in Chapter Five (pp.125 – 126), this work has inspired scholarship and discourse that challenges the relationship between choreography and human movement. Importantly, not all of these works are open, and some depend upon fairly exact repetition,⁷² however they also cannot be fully articulated as notated structures of movement. This is perhaps a result of the way in which such choreographers consciously and deliberately mis-align themselves with the traditional view of dance.

Each of these examples further demonstrates that some dance works resist articulation through standard notation systems, and perhaps accounts for the development of idiosyncratic forms of inscription. McFee suggests the ease and

⁷² See Pakes (2015) for a detailed discussion of the ontology of works of 'conceptual' dance.

increase of video technology is responsible for the lack of interest in notation (2011: 52). However, I suggest that the situation may be attributable to the way in which only certain types of dance works are constrained by specific structures of movement.

As McFee points out,

[t]oday, what is standardly called *dance notation* is essentially movement notation, designed to record accurately movements of the human body (McFee 2011: 52).

However, the conflation of dance and movement may be inappropriate. Even choreographers whose work demonstrates formal and aesthetic priorities, such as Forsythe, adopt variability as a key choreographic component (Casperson 2013). For example *One Flat Thing, reproduced* features sections of improvisation, which are constrained by agreed sets of cues, but do not rely on the exact repetition of specific movement. Although systems such as Labanotation do incorporate mechanisms for dealing with unset material models which assume a relationship between dance works and set movement structures may be flawed.

One feature of dance that is foregrounded through the examination of 'choreographic objects' is that works take multiple forms. Whilst some, such as *Rosas danst Rosas* can be accurately instanced through learning a sequence of movement, others, such as *No Time to Fly* rely upon engagement with deliberately open-ended instructions and the principles of Hay's practice. In relation to music Stephen Davies uses the

notion of ontological thickness to explain how some works are more fully indicated than others. He suggests that,

[p]ieces consisting of abstract structures of note types are ontologically thinner than those specified at the level of note tokens. Thinner works determine less of the fine detail of their performances than do thicker ones (Davies 2001: 3).

This way of thinking might also apply to dance works, which vary greatly in terms of how much detail is required for an instance of the work.

The inherent variability of dance performances means that it is possible to suggest that even ‘thick’ works, correlating with Rubidge’s “ontology of substance” (2000a: 6) are not “closed” (Rubidge 2000a: 7). Each staging of a work involves individual performance interpretations, and often departs dramatically from Goodman’s strict demands regarding compliance to the score. There are of course examples of works that rely on close compliance to a certain set of movements, equally, close compliance to sets of instructions might be important to some works, such as Summers’ work *Instant Choice*, referred to in Chapter Four (p.88), whilst others do not share this feature at all. I therefore suggest that the binary of open and closed works is somewhat simplified and does not fully explain the ways in which dance works seem to exist on a continuum in relation to compliance with movement notation, inscription, instructions and so forth. I suggest that the flexibility of dance works perhaps accounts for the way in which standard notation systems have not been universally adopted. Whilst Armelagos and Sirridge (1978), McFee (2011) and Pouillaude (n.d.) argue that systems such as Feuillet and Labanotation

underdetermine the work, I suggest that in fact the opposite could be true, in that flexibility plays a central role in dance works, as well as features other than movement often being central to the work's identity.

Pouillaude suggests that the development of notation systems allowed for dance works to circulate, marking a shift from the autographic to allographic (n.d.: 6). He states that,

notation made it possible to consider the choreographic work an ideal object that functions as a set of correct performance instances and thereby allows restaging and reconstructions outside of the linear series produced by oral transmission (Pouillaude n.d.: 6).

It is suggested by Pouillaude that this shift was conceptualised by Laban and Feuillet as a form of emancipation, but that this was in fact driven by ideologies of control (n.d.: 7), echoing Foster (2011) and Bench's (2008) argued connection between Feuillet notation and colonialism, discussed in Chapter One (pp.16 – 17). Pouillaude goes on to suggest that,

the ambiguous status of the choreographic work, neither autographic nor allographic, is a direct consequence of the failure of notation, understood not as an incapacity to describe dance, but as an incapacity to become integrated with practice (Pouillaude n.d.: 8).

Pouillaude's claim is that notation systems were insufficient to transform the nature of the choreographic work into a stable entity. However, I suggest that the failures of notation are less to do with the lack of a sufficient system, than

with the disconnection between the notion of structurally replicating movement and the nature of dance works. It is possible to suggest then that the way in which some works resist inscription via notation, accounts for the development of scoring methods that bring together the debris of choreographic process, performance documentation, artist interviews and so on in order to give equal weight to features other than movement.

Process, Product and Score

As demonstrated by the discussion in Chapter Four, the term 'score' is used to refer to a wide variety of objects. They may be mental, verbal or written entities, which may be shared or private. However, despite being an expanded concept, it is not the case that the term can refer to anything, or the word would become redundant. Scores have some unifying or 'constitutive'⁷³ features. Generally speaking McFee's record/recipe distinction still applies, because whichever form they take, scores generally serve to document or instigate action. Van Imschoot suggests that despite the breadth of the concept,

[i]n most cases, however, scores are fundamentally characterized by the contiguity and metonymy of tools and aids: they are a trace *of* and a reroute back to a praxis, whether directly or indirectly, mimickingly or mockingly, revered or reversed. Metaphorically, linking us back to the body and its modes of enactment, one could say that they are neurological centers of determinacy in a larger synaptic network where information fires (Van Imschoot, 2010).

⁷³ Goehr provides a helpful account of the difference between 'essential' and 'constitutive' features (1992: 71 -75).

This account articulates a commonality between the multiple types of score. However, the double clause of record and recipe or ‘trace’ and ‘reroute back to praxis’ is problematic in the case of *Synchronous Objects*, *Using the Sky*, and *A Choreographer’s Score*. If we are to concede that scores are defined by their ability to provide both a trace (or record) and/or ‘recipes’ to instigate reroutes to praxis, where does this leave these objects?

In the case of *Using the Sky*, both the text-score and the digital-scores are records, or traces. Furthermore, the text-score simultaneously performs the function of a recipe, however the function of the digital-score is harder to establish. It is important to note the way that Van Imschoot views scores as offering a “reroute to praxis” (2010). This suggests that scores do not merely instigate a specific performance, rather that they can be used to generate practice and arguably offer access to the artist’s working processes, offering something broader than the mapping of a single work. However, the score is still conceived of as underlying action of some kind. Although ‘choreographic objects’ have generative potential, this is secondary to their status as a tool for studying the work.

Suggesting that scores instigate practice, as opposed to specific movement structures further points towards the out the difficulties of inscribing some dance works through standardised notation. Importantly, however choreographic process and practice is often shared, not only through idiosyncratic scores, but also in various academic, artistic and performative contexts. This means that process, practice and praxis often become part of the final product, sometimes even eclipsing the performance as the

primary point of interest,⁷⁴ yet processes cannot be captured via movement notation methods.

Van Imschoot's articulation accurately describes Hay's text-score – which provides information about how to *practice* in order to perform the work. However, the digital-score offers a different type of information. The wealth of visual images provided on the site means that adopting *Using the Sky* as a route into Hay's practice would provide a very different experience than using only the text-score. Responses to Hay's directives are likely to be influenced by the recordings, animations and visualisations. It is hard to imagine being able to work with the text-score via *Using the Sky* without images and recollections of the executants' ⁷⁵ versions informing the resulting movement. This means that specific movements or images become synonymous with the work. This situation negates its established ontology as essentially variable and intrinsically linked with the practice and bodily perception of Hay and the executant. Furthermore, were one able to ignore the images and respond purely to the text-score and Hay's explanations, the function of *Using the Sky* would be called into question. If the goal is to practice and instigate *No Time to Fly*, working with the text-score alone would be more effective than accessing the work via *Using the Sky*.

⁷⁴ For example, in a discussion of her work *Revolve* (2011), Carol Brown suggested that there would be no reason to re-perform the work, as it was the choreographic process that was the primary outcome.

⁷⁵ This term is used by Hay and the Motion Bank team (2013) to refer to the dancers who interpret the score.

This outcome reposes the question; is *Using the Sky* a score? Its function does not align it with explanations from McFee and Van Imschoot. Perhaps these articulations are not the most useful. Burrows identifies two main approaches to writing a score:

[i]n the first kind what is written is a representation of the piece itself, a template which holds within it the detail, in linear time of what you will eventually see or hear. A classical music score works this way (Burrows 2010: 141).

This description accurately explains how a score might be created of a work that requires a resistance to variability. This type of score is typical of Labanotation and other standardised approaches, whereby the primary aim is to flatten variability by documenting as many details as possible. Burrows outlines the second approach:

[i]n the other kind of score, what is written or thought is a tool for information, image and inspiration, which acts as a source for what you will see, but whose shape may be very different in the final realisation (Burrows 2010: 141).

Here we have an accurate description of how scoring is used within certain practices, for improvisation and in the development of new choreography. Burrows' second type of score can be adequately applied to Hay's text-score. The written directives provide information, create images and inspire the dancers' responses; rather than dictating the shape of the movement. Some features of *Using the Sky* can be seen to enhance this function. For example, Hay's explanations of the concepts of the work provide further information and inspiration. However, the impact of the recordings remains; imposing visual shape. These accounts further enforce my suggestion that *Using the Sky* was not developed to function as a recipe or a tool to instigate action.

Artists and researchers use scores differently. Burrows is likely to be thinking about the role of the score from an artist's perspective, whereas from a researcher's point of view a score might be a tool through which to analyse the work, rather than to instigate action. Whilst scores are conventionally created by artists (or notators) and perhaps used by researchers for analysis, 'choreographic objects' are primarily research oriented. For example, as outlined in Chapter Four (p.149), Zuniga Shaw (2009) suggests that *Synchronous Objects* was developed as a choreographic resource, not as a means of work-preservation.

It certainly does not seem feasible to instantiate *One Flat Thing, reproduced* via the digital-score and in this sense it is possible to argue that it does not fit within the required parameters to truly count as a dance score. However, the site does embody a motivation to feed back into practice. As discussed in Chapter Five (pp.150 – 152 and 153 – 154), *Synchronous Objects* has a generative capacity. For example, Cressie's suggestion that one of motivations for the Statistical Counterpoint Tool is, "not only to summarise, but to inspire" (Cressie 2009).

Equally, Cvejić suggests that no matter how extensive *A Choreographer's Score* is, "it wouldn't, without further enquiry, be adequate as the exclusive source for reinterpreting or reconstructing the whole choreography" (in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 18). However, she goes on to express the intention that the score will, "spark further in-depth specialist research and interpretation" (2012: 18), thus reiterating the score as an object of study and implying that it is not merely a static

document. It has a generative, capacity, albeit in an open and indirect sense. The impact of the process of generating the score on De Keersmaecker's own process perhaps remains to be seen. Interestingly, Hay has recently developed a new performance work for the Cullberg Ballet, called *Figure a Sea*, which uses the 21 recordings from *Using the Sky* as the choreographic stimuli (deLahunta and Jenett 2015).

As discussed in Chapter Five (pp. 153 – 154), analysing the choreographic principles of the work as a way to feed back into the making process aligns with Adshead's suggestion that analysis informs choreographic practice (1988: 7). Although these 'choreographic objects' do not provide 'recipe's *per se* in the forms of strict sets of rules, notations or instructions, they can be seen as providing a way to further and develop choreographic practices. Therefore, despite not being primarily intended as tools for instantiation, the scores do have generative features, both for the choreographer's continued practice and for the users of the objects.

The next important question is, in what way(s) do theses scores allow access to the work? This issue seems particularly pertinent in regards to *Using the Sky* and *Synchronous Objects*, as both sites feature born-digital, full-length, unedited recordings of the work. In both cases the recordings are specially shot and the camerawork means that the action is clearly displayed. Even prior to their mediation through the sites, these films stand in an ambiguous relationship to the work itself,

however, following the discussion in Chapter Six, I suggest that they offer tokens of the works, albeit in a different form to a live performance event. The recordings included within *A Choreographer's Score* offer a different form of access. They are excerpts, both from recordings of the work in performance and the specially made film of the work. They are specifically used to illustrate De Keersmaecker's discussion, as opposed to being the primary stimulus for analysis. Whilst the film tokens on *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky* provide access to the work in its entirety, the edited recordings presented here offer only short insights into features of the work.

Upon the first reading it appears that, given how the film-tokens of *One Flat Thing, reproduced* and *Using the Sky* allow us to see the works in question, presumably scores can be seen as facilitating this experience. However, this is not as straightforward as it first appears. The way that the sites function, means that users are encouraged to engage with the movement content alongside textual and audio information. How does this then stand in relation to the work? On the one hand, the function of this information is to reveal features of the work, yet on the other hand it provides a starkly different experience to watching the work through a film or performance token. Furthermore, the fragmentary nature of the sites means that users are perhaps less likely to encounter the entire film.

Accepting that recordings allow access to the work means that accessing *No Time to Fly*, for example, via the via multiple recordings, extensive written accounts, interviews with Hay and digital visualisations provided on *Using the Sky* arguably

provides more knowledge of the work than witnessing a single live performance of it. For example, I have never seen the work live yet I am highly knowledgeable of it. *Using the Sky* facilitates multiple instances of the work. However, this has implications for the nature of the work. For example, does it mean that *No Time to Fly* has become a digital work? It does not seem right to suggest that it is no longer a live work, as it is still possible to perform and encounter it without the digital score. However, the work's potential instantiations have multiplied. *No Time to Fly* is shown to exist in constant permutations, activations and performances through live, abstract and digital forms. Although the score can be seen as concerned with capturing its essential features, it equally alters them, meaning that a score might be able to comment upon the work's features, but arguably cannot constrain them, because in doing so it alters the very nature of the work

This situation can also be said to apply to *One Flat Thing, reproduced* and *Rosas danst Rosas*. The way that the works are manifest in multiple forms raises questions about the interpretation of the work, such as; is there a correct way to perceive, construct and remember the work? Birringer points out that projects such as *Synchronous Objects* and *Motion Bank* allow users to assemble and manipulate the material of the work, posing the question, "[w]hat exactly is being remembered?" (Birringer 2013: 10). This question is not exclusive to digital scores; spectators of live performance are equally able and likely to remember fragmented, dis-assembled versions of the work. However, Birringer's question does foreground the roles of the people who develop and use 'choreographic objects'. As discussed in Chapter One (pp.17 – 18), scores embody ideologies and the selection of components and methods is not neutral. This

is evident in the adoption of particular analytic frameworks, which present the work in accordance with cultural and philosophical principles. Each of these scores is expansive in approach, and the user has the ability to navigate an individual path through the score. Yet they present the work in accordance with the beliefs of those who developed them.

This discussion foregrounds key metaphysical questions; does this mean that the work is now essentially defined by these ideologies? Has the identity and ontology of the work changed as they are re-inscribed through digital media, or does this process of scoring reveal ontological features of the work that were inaccessible before? This question highlights the tension between a platonist view, which suggests that the features of the work are set and unchanging and a perspective, which believes that the nature of the work is essentially linked to its reception and perception. The question will have to remain open for now, however, it is worth mentioning that if one were to argue that the very nature of dance is capable of change, the conceptualisation of the work as a stable entity would be under threat, thus implying the potential for alternative modes of explaining dance and its multiple instances

Scores as Study Tools

The motivation to share ‘internal’ features of the work is evident on all three objects through design decisions as well as the selection of materials. For example, the construction and design of *Using the Sky* suggests that it has been developed to teach

users about Hay's process, and provide information about the conceptual and choreographic features of *No Time to Fly*. It therefore seems to be intended as a study object. Despite the non-linear appearance of the site, the information is organised in a systematic way, making it easy to follow developing themes. For example, as explained in Chapter Seven (p.172), the set that features the executants' insights is positioned to the right of the 'Introduction to Concepts' page, meaning it is encountered first, assuming users follow a left-right navigational format. This is significant, as the reflections of the performers would arguably make little or no sense without Hay's prior explanation of the work. For example, in the 'Introduction to Concepts' section Hay explains how the 'what if' questions are like balls that the executants must "keep in the air" (Hay in Motion Bank 2013). Meaning that the activation of these questions is an essential feature of any dancer's interpretation. Moving on to Durning's insights, she says of Section Four, "[f]or fred and ginger what I'm trying to do is keep all of the balls in the air as much as possible" (Durning in Motion Bank 2013). Importantly, without knowing that Durning is referring to Hay's questions here, the insight lacks context. Hay's previous explanation allows users to understand Durning's insight, implying that there is linearity to the site, despite its fragmented appearance.

Synchronous Objects and *A Choreographer's Score* similarly provide a deepening in understanding. It has been established that these objects are intended to disseminate 'choreographic thinking', but how does this contribute to their ontology? This feature does not automatically exclude them from the category of scores, as the sharing of

choreographic thought is arguably a feature of all dance scores. However, the centrality of recorded versions of the work, and the way they are removed from practice means that they are more complex. Significantly, the way that the scores are given different titles to the works implies that they are individual entities of some kind. Indeed Zuniga Shaw suggests,

[t]he idea of a choreographic object allows for the transformation of a dance from one manifestation (the performance onstage) into an array of other possibilities including but extending beyond visualizations (such as information or installation) (Zuniga Shaw 2014: 117).

This points to ontological complexity, as the 'choreographic object' is at once a manifestation of the work and a transformation of it into a distinct entity. *Synchronous Objects* demonstrates this ontological ambiguity. For example, the visualisations create aesthetically stimulating patterns and forms and the abstracted representations offer creative renderings of the data. Such objects can arguably be understood as belonging to the category of 'computer art'.⁷⁶ Yet artworks are often considered to be distinct from objects with practical functions, and require different modes of attention (Stolnitz 1969), thus implying that despite their creative attributes and aesthetic qualities, the way that these visualisations, were developed as part of a tool for disseminating knowledge can be seen to problematise their art-status.

Aesthetician Jerome Stolnitz draws a distinction between practical and aesthetic

⁷⁶ See Lopes (2009) and Popper (1993) for detailed philosophical interrogations of computer art.

attention, suggesting that our usual mode of attention is practical and therefore considers things in terms of their usefulness, whereas the ‘aesthetic attitude’ requires a non-practical, or “disinterested” mode of contemplation (1969: 18 - 19).⁷⁷ Thinking about the types of attention paid to the visualisations reveals their ontological complexity, whilst they can be considered purely aesthetically, they also have practical functions, to reveal features of the choreographic structure of *One Flat Thing, reproduced*.

It seems that we do not seem to view ‘choreographic objects’ solely as artistic entities due to their practical function — to communicate knowledge about the work(s). Perhaps then it is more appropriate to think about these scores in relation to other types of tools. It is possible to suggest that they function as guides to help the reader understand more about the work. They might be compared to an audio guide at an art gallery, an annotated copy of a novel, or a ‘Behind the Scenes’ section on a DVD. Each of these things encourages viewers to understand and appreciate features of the work that are not present purely in their physical manifestations. Yet, they do not stand entirely alone from the work of art, as their existence is dependent upon it. The motivation to guide the user’s attention implies that that greater knowledge of certain features of the work will enhance their appreciation of it. For example, users are able to comprehend the depth of complexity involved in the construction and performance of *One Flat Thing, reproduced*. They can appreciate the structural rigour of De Keersmaecker’s process, and the depth of the performer’s experience in *No Time*

⁷⁷ Stolnitz’s notion of the ‘aesthetic attitude’ is widely discussed in Philosophical Aesthetics. It is disputed by Dickie (1969), amongst others.

to *Fly*. This phenomenon is similarly demonstrated by the previous comparisons. For example, gallery audio guides provide further contextual and analytical knowledge about the work in order to deepen visitor's readings of the work and, arguably enhance their appreciation. Not all of the objects on the sites share this feature. On *Synchronous Objects*, for example, the more abstract 'artistic' objects engage users in a different way. However, the objects situated in the far left hand column seem to share a motivation to 'explain' the work, implicitly suggesting that knowledge of the structures of the work will be of benefit to users of the score.

However, despite some similarities, the relationship between the 'choreographic object' and the work is more complex than merely providing a guide. This is partly because the objects do not sit alongside a performance of the work, but rather such instances are embedded within them. They often contain primary source material, such as rehearsal footage and choreographic notes, bridging the distance between the work and the score. Furthermore, they visually represent the work. Unlike the use of "symbols" (Peirce 2001: 10) in standardised notations, as discussed in Chapter Four (pp.97 – 98), the use of drawings, video and verbal descriptions function as "icons" and "indexes" (Peirce 2001: 10), standing for the object of performance via correlation, resemblance and associative connection as opposed to through abstract codes. Therefore these scores generate visual images of the work in performance, meaning that they do not merely guide a reading of the work, but simultaneously present a version of it. This methodology challenges the traditional view that scores are outside of the work, demonstrated through Pouillaude's notion of "externality"

(n.d.: 5), by offering alternative modes of representation. Hence, such scores re-configure the work/score/performance relationship.

Given that the ‘choreographic objects’ discussed do not strictly adhere to the commonalities and conditions identified by Burrows (2010), Goodman (1976), McFee (1992, 2011) or Van Imschoot (2010), why should we accept them as scores? I wish to ground ontological suggestions in the common practices of those who use the terms, therefore, if these objects are widely accepted as scores, our ontological structures should accurately reflect this. However, the newness of the objects means that it is not entirely clear that they are commonly accepted as scores. Zuniga Shaw implies some disagreement with Forsythe about their score-hood, opting instead for the terms “visualizations” and “objects” (2014: 97), However, I suggest that considering these objects as a new form of score, (without dismissing them as also ‘visualisations’ and ‘objects’), reveals insights into the motivations and intended role of the objects. After all, those people developing them noticed, either implicitly or explicitly, that they had sufficient score-like qualities to label them as such. Furthermore, thinking of them in relation to other forms of score allows for the consideration of ontological features and relations. If we are to concede that they are indeed scores, the result is that scores do not need to function as tools for (re) performance. This offers an alternative relationship between the score and the work. The score offers a rendering, expansion and guided reading of the work. It is a tool for the spectator, researcher and practitioner to (re) think the work, as opposed to a mechanism through which to perform, re-stage and revise.

Summary

Considering the score-status of these objects demonstrates the link between scores and ontology. Examination of their features suggests that they seek to uncover and establish characteristics of the work, implying that they are the result of ontological modes of enquiry. Whilst these scores do not serve the *function* of traditional scores, they also do not entirely contradict traditional scoring practices. They seem similarly concerned with documenting the work's features, but in an expansive, as opposed to reductionist manner. A further insight from Zuniga Shaw articulates the extension of the work through the 'choreographic object',

[i]n our work, dances act as choreographic resources, not to be pinned down, but instead to be fleshed out, to explore their contours, to see what is generated in an engagement between choreographic information and its articulation in digital media visualization, and to offer this up for exchange (Zuniga Shaw 2014: 99).

This comment demonstrates a resistance to the stabilising function associated with movement notation scores. However, these scores do provide some stability for the work in accordance with the motivations and intentions of their makers, whilst simultaneously informing the identity of the work; thus demonstrating that it is arguably impossible to entirely fix a dance work.

The methods, mediums and incentives for scoring are vast and varied, however I suggest that a further expanded conception of the term allows for scores to be developed as objects of study and that they can also be associated with the act of

ontological enquiry. Although not all scores might be conceptualised as such, I suggest that the motivation to uncover the existential and identity features of a work does relate to many forms of score. For example, Pouillaude writes, "Feuillet notation aims at discovering, by the graphic and analytical device of the sign, the real *nature* of choreographic entities" (n.d: 16). This motivation can be linked to 'choreographic objects', which deploy both theoretical and visualisation modes of enquiry, proposing new forms of score that both stabilise and theorise the work. The next chapter continues to probe the nature of the three case studies, considering how they offer a form of 'poetics', which comprise 'affective' expressions of choreographic principles, generating interaction between digital and human forms and implicating a posthuman paradigm.

Chapter Ten: Posthuman Poetics

Introduction

The positioning of the author at the centre of *A Choreographer's Score*, *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky* raises many interesting questions about authorship, interpretation and transmission. One thing that is clear is that all three objects provide an opportunity for the choreographer to articulate and discover elements of their practice. This observation perhaps leads to a suggestion made by both deLahunta (2013a: 2)⁷⁸ and Cvejić (2012: 8) that these objects offer a form of 'poetics'. This chapter considers this claim in detail, asking specifically how technology facilitates the cultivation of a posthuman poetics, which captures and re-presents the emotive, or affective nature of movement alongside choreographic theories and structures.

In order to further examine what these scores are, and move away from comparisons with movement notation, I consider the notion of 'poetics', and the relationship between this function and current cultural discourses. 'Poetic' is a term that is usually associated with language, perhaps thought of as that which emotes, or describes in a way that need not be objectively 'truthful'. The poetic function of language is described by linguist Roman Jakobson as emotive, as opposed to denotative (in Louppe 2010: 4). So perhaps the poetic function of dance is that which makes it expressive. What then is *a* poetics?

⁷⁸ As mentioned previously (p.22) I am working with an unpublished version of this article, which is published in various places.

French literary theorist Gérard Genette draws a helpful distinction between criticism and poetics. He explains that criticism is an internal, formal and/or interpretive analysis of single texts or works and that this approach does not deal with the “immanence” of the work (2005: 5). This is an issue that has been keenly discussed in dance. The nature of dance, as accessed through live performance, means that many have suggested that documentation does not capture the ephemeral, singular and immanent nature of live performance.⁷⁹ However, although dance performance is ephemeral, it leaves traces, these are sometimes tangible (such as documents), and often non-tangible, such as memories, mental images, emotions, sensations and so on. This is where the idea of a poetics might be helpful. Genette defines poetics as the “analysis of (more or less) lasting traits of the literary fact” (2005: 5). This account can perhaps be directly applied to these dance scores. Furthermore, dance analysis has an established relationship with linguistics.⁸⁰ Scholars have drawn on frameworks and methods arising in literary theory to develop analytic methods for dance (Bunker *et al* 2013: 6, O’Shea 2010: 6, Rowell 2009: 137) the adoption of the notion of poetics, can perhaps be understood as another way of drawing connections between literary frameworks and dance analysis.

⁷⁹ Phelan’s (1993) view is perhaps the most well known example of this perspective. She clarifies her view in an interview with Marquard Smith (2003), explaining that she is not against documentation *per se*, but that recording is something ontologically distinct to performance (2003: 294 – 295).

⁸⁰ This relationship is not without its critics, for example Williams (2004) challenges the application of linguistic analysis to the anthropological study of dance.

Dance Poetics

The relationship between poetics and dance is not new. In *Poetics of Contemporary Dance* Laurence Louppe provides a detailed justification for the applicability of the notion to dance. Originally published in French in 1997, this book was translated by Sally Gardner in 2010, meaning that the idea of a poetics has been give recent attention in dance discourse. Louppe's book considers contemporary dance as a whole and provides detailed consideration of the "lasting traits" (Genette 2005: 5 of the form, as opposed to focussing on a single choreographer or work.

Nevertheless, some of Louppe's explanations are helpful in relation to these scores.

For example, the book starts with the articulation that,

[a] poetics seeks to define and uncover in a work of art what touches us, animates our sensibility, and resonates within our imagination (Louppe 2010: 3-4).

This quote demonstrates how a poetic analysis is not purely concerned with mapping particular body parts, or considering the choreographic structure of the work, it also addresses the expressive, or affective nature of the work. This articulation clearly relates to Genette's conception of poetics, and already seems to justify deLahunta and Cvejić's use of the term, these scores are certainly concerned with 'uncovering'. For example, the desire to discover and share features that are not accessible in performance, as articulated by Cvejić (in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 10), suggests a process of excavation and revelation. In the case of *Synchronous Objects*, computerised annotations probe and explore that which is physically present in

performance, in order to reveal non-physical features. The annotations offer a form of uncovering — making imperceptible features tangible to viewers, in order to theorise how the movement generates its effect.

Loupe suggests that a poetics, “not only tell us what a work does to us, it teaches us how it is made” (2010: 4). Each of these three scores embody this double function. For example, the animations of choreographic principles on *Using the Sky* and *Synchronous Objects* clearly relate to the first function. It is apparent through these objects that maintaining, or simulating the effect of the live performance of the work is an important feature in the construction of the sites. The animations provide alternative renditions of the works. Once the body is removed as the primary focal point, the energetic, affective sense of the movement is heightened.

This approach to scoring dance can be linked to a broader interest in Philosophy and Critical Theory with the notion of affect. The so-called ‘affective turn’, arising from the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980), Brian Massumi (2002),⁸¹ and their contemporaries, has seen an increased emphasis on bodily experience in a wide range of fields including; Cultural Studies, Sociology, Philosophy, and Performance Studies. There is a particular emphasis on interpersonal relations, and the ability of bodies to impact on the experiential state of another body.⁸² As a bodily act, often shared, the experience of dancing and watching dance has a clear link with

⁸¹ Massumi has translated some of Deleuze and Guattari’s work, as well as formulating his own theories and writings.

⁸² See Apostolou-Hölscher (2014) for an account of the ‘affective turn’ in relation to dance.

discussions of affect. Indeed, a lot of recent discourse in dance has started to draw on this area of thought.⁸³

Whilst Deleuze, Guattari, Massumi and others are firmly situated within the field of Continental Philosophy, I am interested in the link between discourses that consider affect in relation to dance, and conversations occurring in Philosophical Aesthetics. It seems that there may be an interesting comparison to be drawn between affect, expression and kinaesthetic empathy. For example, whilst dance theorists are increasingly referring to dance's affective function,⁸⁴ as long ago as 1938 RG Collingwood suggested that expression is a defining feature of art. The significance of expression has also been examined in specific relation to dance.⁸⁵ Louppe herself suggests that, "[a]ll movement is...automatically expressive, even if it does not have 'expression' as its aim" (2010: 4-5). Capturing the expressive nature of dance seems central to these scores, yet given the close relationship between the body and expression or affect, this motivation perhaps seems at odds with Forsythe's interest in expressing choreographic principles *without* the body. This is where the animations are particularly interesting, as they re-present bodily actions and features through abstraction.

There are of course differences between affect and expression. The distinctions and comparisons between these notions require further exploration, however, this

⁸³ See Manning (2013), McCormack (2014) and Sabisch (2013), amongst others.

⁸⁴ For example Čičigoj's (2013) discussion of *A Choreographer's Score* refers to the role of 'affect'.

⁸⁵ McFee (2011), Beauquel (2013), Carr (1987).

relationship provides a good example of the interplay between Continental and Analytic Philosophy. As with kinaesthetic empathy, affect is perhaps most simply conceptualised as occurring between the dancer and the audience, whereas these scores are at least partially authored by the choreographer. Part of the analysis concerns choreographic process, and prioritises the voice of the choreographer. This leads us to the second part of Louppe's description that poetics, "not only tell us what a work does to us, it teaches us how it is made" (2012: 4). This suggests that the author or artist is central to a poetics. This point is further demonstrated by Cvejić's suggestion that the process of making the score allowed De Keersmaeker,

to articulate the ideas and intuitions underlying her methods, thus inscribing into the text a statement of her poetics, and a kind of reasoning that leads her in creation (Cvejić in De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012: 9).

This statement relates to the ways that poetics are concerned with explaining how the affect of a work is generated, rather than merely describing the affective function.

As repeatedly mentioned, one of the key differences between *Synchronous Objects*, *Using the Sky* and *A Choreographer's Score* and traditional dance scores is that 'choreographic objects' are broadly concerned with drawing attention to the processes involved in formulating and performing the work, rather than purely inscribing a sequence of movement. The work is not only analysed as a product through the annotation of performance events; but the choreographic labour involved in the process of making is also analysed and shared. This approach

highlights the relationship between the choreographer and the audience. A method clearly articulated through Louppe's suggestion that a poetics asks,

[w]hat path does the artist follow to reach the point where the artistic act is available to perception, there where our consciousness can discover it and begin to resonate with it? (Louppe 2010: 4).

This is illustrated through a section of the written component of *A Choreographer's Score*, which reads,

[t]he second movement meant "morning" for us, that is, high energy, "arbeit" (work), mechanic. I remember having the image of Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*, but a punk "fuck you" attitude was also already present.

The music recalls the industrial rock of the 1980s.

Yes, the music we were listening to was D.A.F., Joy Division, Nina Hagen, Talking Heads, TC Matic, and also Sex Pistols...the choreography was structured into a binary division of two pairs (De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 81).

This extended quotation demonstrates how the dialogue of the score replicates the relationship between the choreography and the music. The topics are addressed alongside, echoing the decisions and connections at the heart of De Keersmaecker's process. The focus on the artist's creative path also relates to *Synchronous Object* and *Using the Sky*, each of which foregrounds the decision-making processes of the artists, through interviews, narration and interactive tools.

This positioning of the author informs the viewer's interpretation of the work, contradicting influential post-structuralist notions of authorship. As mentioned in

Chapter Two (p.41), as Dance Studies was established as an academic discipline in the 1980s, scholars such as Adshead *et al* drew connections between the reading of dances and post-structuralist thinking (Carter and O'Shea 2010: 145). In particular, the authority of the reader to determine the meaning of texts proposed by Barthes (1977) and others, informed the development of a spectator-oriented paradigm. Barthes' seminal essay 'The Death of the Author', originally published in 1967, dismisses the author as the source of empirical truth, and suggests that the reader is responsible for determining the meaning of a text. Barthes suggests that,

[t]o give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing (Barthes 1977: 147).

This notion had a significant impact on the roles adopted by choreographers, critics and audience members, as discourses in Dance Studies have mirrored those in Literature, Critical Theory and Philosophical Aesthetics, prioritising the autonomy of the reader or spectator to determine meaning, over the intentions of the author, as demonstrated through examples such as the dance analysis model by Adshead *et al* (1988) discussed previously (pp. 43 – 44 and 148 – 149), which makes no explicit mention of the intentions or motivations of the choreographer.

It is important to note that De Keersmaecker, Forsythe and Hay's articulations do not refer to denotative functions of the movement. For example, none of the choreographers claim that movement *x means y*, thus avoiding offering the explicit "final signifiers" referred to by Barthes (1977: 147). The decision to articulate process

and structures, as opposed to semiotic meanings, offers a form of revealing, exposing the work (as a verb) behind the dance work, and leaves some aspects of the reading open. However, contra-Barthes, the texts are clearly provided with authors, who openly direct the attention of the reader. The emphasis on the choreographer challenges Barthes' view as the author is foregrounded, shaping the identity and reading of the work. As mentioned in Chapter Eight (p.196), Cvejić suggests that it would be regressive to prioritise the choreographer's insights over other readings (2012: 8). However, the location of the choreographer in the construction and transmission of the poetics offer constraints on the interpretation of the works, guiding the viewer to see features of the work in accordance with their processes and intentions.

Perceiving Abstract Forms

Loupe's claim that a poetics considers what a work does to us and how it touches, animates and resonates (2010: 4- 5), has particular significance in relation to *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky*, both of which feature abstract forms, not only to analyse but also to *re-present* the expressive qualities of the works through digital media. I want to return now to the topic of affect, expression and kinaesthetic empathy, considering whether animated expressions of choreographic principles can generate the bodily experiences associated with these concepts. Durning describes her response to Weber's animation as "visceral" (in Motion Bank 2013), implying a reaction that does not arise from conscious cognitive activity, but is more body-led.

As the descriptions of the animations hopefully demonstrate, they are compelling aesthetic forms.

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Figure 12: Annotations demonstrating alignments (Forsythe and OSU 2009)

For example, the alignment annotations on *Synchronous Objects* operate in real time and are visible only as long as the moment of alignment between the dancers occurs, meaning that that they echo the rhythms and dynamics of the movement, creating striking aesthetic forms. Furthermore, they can be viewed separately from the dancers. Without the body the annotations become animations, with expressive, as opposed to didactic functions. The animated annotations carve through space as they re-live the impetus of the body and foreground the expressive trace of the movement. Removing the body from view paradoxically helps to highlight its expressive capabilities through animated traces. Thus exemplifying the first part of Louppe's double function to "tell us what a work does to us" (2010: 4).

The '3D Alignment Forms' object, previously described (pp.154 – 156), further abstracts the data, re-presenting the action of the body in immaterial form. The images occupy a paradoxical space, as the body is visibly removed, yet perceptually present. This paradox is equally true of Weber's animation on *Using the Sky*. As mentioned in Chapter Seven (p.175), Weber describes how he realised that the animation needed bodily features to adequately interpret the score.⁸⁶ He goes on to state that he wanted to avoid developing images that were too "bodyesque" (Weber in Motion Bank 2013), thus he developed a body in abstract form.

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Library, Coventry University.

Figure 13: Animated adaptation of *No Time to Fly* (Weber in Motion Bank 2013)

Weber's animation consists of a continually moving flock of lines, reminiscent of brush-strokes. They move in and out of bodily shapes, never reaching a fully representational form. Weber manipulated the medium to maintain bodily features despite not creating a direct representation of a human form. Like a body, the

⁸⁶ This is not exclusive to Hay's practice and relates to an observation made by deLahunta and Leach (2015) in discussion of their project with Wayne McGregor, which involved the development of another digital, abstract body.

animated lines move sequentially and travel as a unit. Sketched lines create the impression of a floor, meaning the form has a relationship to gravity. This seems to be a key characteristic of the animation, as gravity is a fundamental component of human experiences and therefore encourages a reading of the animation as in some way bodily. At one point the lines form a stick figure, which waves a finger in the air, directly responding to the score, the words of a quote from a Samuel Beckett poem are written in space, “[S]trictly speaking I believe I have never been anywhere” (in Motion Bank 2013). The words fall to the floor, their origin remaining in the figure’s grasp, like wool unravelled, the moment passed. This section demonstrates the similarity between the animation and a dance performance, as the continual movement emphasises the ephemerality of the animation and shows how Weber manipulated the medium to maintain bodily features, despite not creating a direct representation of the human form.

Suggesting that the body take digital form can be seen as an adoption of Hayles’ posthuman perspective (1999). She suggests that

the posthuman view thinks of the body as the original prosthesis we all learn to manipulate, so that extending or replacing the body with other prostheses becomes a continuation of a process that began before we were born (Hayles 1999: 3).

Under Hayles’ paradigm, the extension of the body into the digital sphere can be read as the next stage in the body’s socio-cultural evolution. As Hayles points out, this perspective allows for the human being to be articulated with machines (1999: 3), allowing for the material and digital to seamlessly interact. She suggests that, “[i]n the

posthuman, there are no essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulation” (Hayles 1999: 3). The location of the body in these examples poses many interesting questions; such as; is the bodily nature of the image the reason for Durning’s response? And is it possible that such imagery can ignite the same form of physical response as live dancing body?

deLahunta and Leach write, “‘the body’ is something that is compelling to be with. It has presence, and that presence has an effect” (2015: 8). The way that our minds and bodies respond to dance has been researched and theorised from multiple perspectives and often involves recognition of the relationship between the dancer and spectator’s bodies. As long ago as 1933 John Martin — a writer influential in formulating seminal ideas about dance at that time — suggested that the observation of movement triggers physical responses in observers, suggesting the notion of ‘metakinesis’ to explain this reaction.⁸⁷ Martin’s concept of a kind of one-to-one resonance between viewer and mover appears to have a lot in common with later scientific work on dance perception, particularly kinaesthetic empathy⁸⁸ and mirror neurons⁸⁹ — all exploring the idea of a certain sensed relationship between viewer and performer. More recently, the affective turn has resulted in dance scholarship that focuses on bodily sensations and experiences.⁹⁰ It is possible to suggest that cultivation of digital poetics are an indirect result of an interest in affect; the

⁸⁷ Republished in Copeland, R. and Cohen, M. (eds.) (1983).

⁸⁸ See Foster (2011), Reynolds & Reason (2012), Rubidge (2010) amongst others.

⁸⁹ See Calvo – Merino *et al* (2005); Gallese & Goldman (1998)

⁹⁰ See Badiou (2005); Gil (2006); Manning (2009, 2013); Portanova (2013), amongst others.

endeavour to capture what the work does to us involves maintaining or replicating the resonance between the spectator and dancers' bodies in live performance.

The notion that digital images can ignite affective or kinaesthetic responses in observers, further implies a posthuman paradigm, whereby the machine and the body no longer operate as binaries. Moreover, this example demonstrates Hayles' argument that information is embodied. Even if one was to maintain a somewhat out-dated dualist perspective regarding perception – suggesting that it takes place purely in the mind, Weber's animation, and other similar projects challenge this view by posing the possibility of digital information being perceived physically. Following Hayles, it is possible to see the animation as an example of machines and bodies as co-existing within a continuum of reflective, embodied experiences. However, it is important to remember that there is a clear difference in our encounters with actual and abstract bodies. Here I wish to recall the pragmatist posthumanism proposed in Chapter Seven (pp.183 – 184), and think about the shift in terms of a displacement of boundaries (Braidotti 2013: 89), as opposed to an absolute confluence of the physical and virtual worlds.

There has been a large amount of theoretical attention paid to the physical perception of dance movement, however, the development of abstract choreographic images, enhanced by developments in digital technology is relatively new and poses related questions. This is a topic explored by Rubidge who uses the notion of "liminal imagery" (2010: 1) to describe abstract digital images that arise

from the movement of the body and are used to generate new artistic works. She suggests such images are situated on,

a perceptual and conceptual threshold, hovering in an in-between state that is replete with ambiguity and indeterminacy in both perception and conception (2009: 2).

I suggest that this account closely relates to these animations, which negotiate boundaries on the threshold between physical and digital. Furthermore, both examples arise from, and feature movement, yet the forms are polysemic — free from prescribed, determinate meanings. The role of indeterminacy in their conception is also a significant factor, as both objects are the result of subjective interpretations of the choreographic data. Unlike notation, diagrams and recordings, they do not aim to quantify, explain or represent the movement; their making is more open and their function more opaque.

Rubidge's discussion concerns art works that use motion-capture images arising from the movement of a body. Whilst there is some overlap with these animations, in the case of motion capture, a human body has performed the movement. This affects the ontology of the image. The *Synchronous Objects* animations have a different relationship to the body, as they were developed from data gathered through analysing a film. Furthermore Weber's animation has yet another ontology, as it is cultivated by hand in response to choreographic stimuli (Weber in Motion Bank 2013). However, despite their different roots, I suggest that these images share many features. For instance, Rubidge addresses the affective nature of such images,

suggesting that, “embodied modes of consciousness are essential to the process of understanding liminal choreographic imagery in the digital domain” (2009: 1). Whilst theorists such as Noë (2004) and performance scholar Maaïke Bleeker (2010) suggest that perception always concerns the body, these images ignite a different form of response to a textual description, for example. It is therefore perhaps worth considering the role of affect, as a way of understanding how reading the animation differs from other modes of perception. Rubidge draws on the work of Brian Massumi, who describes affect as the “prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another” (Massumi in Rubidge 2009: 3). So, can this passage occur between live and digital bodies? Furthermore, can it account for the impact of abstract ‘bodily’ images?

Rubidge suggests that,

[i]t is the ability of liminal imagery to create such affective resonances, independent of ‘content’ or ‘meaning’ that holds my attention as both maker and viewer (Rubidge 2009: 3).

Considering the animations to be affective has repercussions. Further implicating a posthuman paradigm, it implies that affect is not restricted to the interaction between human bodies in the same space. Rather, abstract images with bodily qualities may evoke the same response as the body is extended into the digital sphere.

The affective nature of the animations further demonstrates the desire to share ‘choreographic knowledge’ with people from outside of dance. The ambiguous form of the expressions requires no analysis or expert knowledge. As mentioned in Chapter Two (pp.52) Montero (2013) suggests that viewers who have undergone dance training have different physical responses to non-trained observers, due to the recognition of certain steps. Removing the steps, and foregrounding the expressive function of the dance, holds the potential to open up the dance to a wider audience.

The digital animations on *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky*, foreground the issues at hand, however the poetic function of *A Choreographer’s Score* is less obvious. The perceptual presence of movement, and therefore (arguably) affect or expression, is limited to De Keersmaecker’s short demonstrations and excerpts of the work on the DVD. This is where the use of technology and De Keersmaecker’s narration of the movement becomes particularly significant, as it allows for the conflation of the analytic with the expressive. The video clips, narrated by De Keersmaecker’s “affective tones” (Cvejić in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012: 12), allow for the poetic, expressive nature of the work to be present in the score. However, Cvejić and De Keersmaecker’s approach more closely aligns to the second part of Louppe’s double function, to teach us how the work is made (2010: 4), as the approach is less ambiguous and more didactic.

Whilst *Using the Sky* and *Synchronous Objects* contain alternative, artistic renditions of the choreography, *A Choreographer’s Score* focuses on deconstructing the work,

leaving it undone, as opposed to re-constituted in order to generate affect. The extraction of the choreography from the dancing is expressed in a more formal and pedagogic manner, allowing for further levels of analysis.⁹¹ Therefore, I suggest that *A Choreographer's Score* is demonstrative of an approach that combines Genette's distinctions between criticism and poetics. It offers a rigorous internal, formal and interpretive analysis of single works, whilst including examples that aim to capture their "immanence" (Genette 2005: 5). Furthermore, the score provides a place for De Keersmaecker to clearly articulate her personal poetics, ensuring the presence of her signature in the legacy of the works.

Summary

Despite the differences between *Synchronous Objects*, *Using the Sky* and *A Choreographer's Score*, they share many features, including, the revelation of structural components, the deconstruction of the making of the work and a concern for capturing the immanence and affect of the body in performance. The combination of these closely relates to articulations from Louppe and Genette about the nature of poetics, as concerned with analysis of the immanence and lasting traits of the work (Genette 2005: 5), as well as examining the making process and resonance with the viewer (Louppe 2010: 3-4).

⁹¹ As demonstrated by Karreman's work (2014b), for example, which pays careful attention to the transmission of De Keersmaecker's practice through the score in relation to motion capture and other digital technologies.

The question of how to capture and re-present the lasting traits of dance has posed a well-versed theoretical and practical puzzle. This chapter has demonstrated the potential of animation in this regard. I suggest that these three case studies are demonstrative of a broader, emergent interest in examining both affect and process, and that it is the combination of these two interests that formulate a poetics. Drawing together articulations about choreographic process with expressive rendering of the choreographic principles through animation and narration cultivates a new form of poetics, which has the potential to evoke affective resonance between the viewer and the abstracted 'bodily' images on screen. This interaction demonstrates a blurring of boundaries between the digital and the flesh, implicating a posthuman paradigm. The perceptual presence of the choreographer and construction of affective liminal imagery proposes a sensorial posthuman poetics, intrinsically linked to the cultural zeitgeist in which they were produced.

Further exploring the cultural context of 'choreographic objects' the next chapter draws on discourses from Social Anthropology, to think through the relationship between the objects and the artistic and cultural context of their production. I consider examples of recently developed performance works that foreground choreographic process to probe the broader artistic setting, enabling me to further address the central question, 'what is a 'choreographic object'?'

Chapter Eleven: Process and Politics

Introduction

Building on the philosophical theorising of the ‘choreographic objects’ in Chapters Six and Seven, this chapter focuses on the artistic and cultural context of their production. I discuss the cultural value systems governing the development of the three case studies. I focus in particular on the role of knowledge and labour, asking how the foregrounding of these elements relates to ideas from Dance Studies, Theatre Studies and Social Anthropology.

This chapter returns to Birringer’s suggestion outlined in Chapter One (p.1), that discourse about choreographic practices has increased in recent years (2013: 8). Alongside ‘choreographic objects’ I consider how such discourse also manifests through the performance of process in contemporary dance practices. Drawing on recent examples from Siobhan Davies (2014) and Jonathan Burrows and Matteo Fargion (2014), I consider how the foregrounding of choreographic process in performance relates to ‘choreographic objects’. Furthermore, considering performative examples helps to gain a clearer picture of the artistic and cultural context of the three case studies.

I address the overarching question of how ‘choreographic objects’ inform spectatorial engagement with dance, as both sets of examples generate alternative ways of responding to dance works. Also considering the central question, of what a

'choreographic object' is, this chapter addresses subsidiary questions such as: What motivates artists and researchers to foreground choreographic processes? How does this reveal and reconfigure cultural and artistic value systems? And, what is the impact of the socio-political climate on the ontology of 'choreographic objects'? In order to explore these questions I draw largely on the work of James Leach (2006, 2012, 2013), who provides insight into socio-cultural context of 'choreographic objects' and responds to questions of value. This perspective allows me to further understand the motivations and significance of these objects. Furthermore, the discussion reveals how cultural value and philosophical ontology can be seen as enmeshed. I revisit the notion of ontological hierarchies began in Chapter Five (pp.122 – 124), suggesting that 'choreographic objects' have the potential to decentralise performance, thus challenging its status as the most significant component of the work.

Throughout its relatively recent history, contemporary dance has been defined by a constant re-shaping, and challenging of imposed or perceived parameters. The genre⁹² indeed arose from a desire to escape the restrictions imposed through the conventions of classical ballet. Early modern dance practitioners, such as Isadora Duncan, dismissed the codified movement and restraining costumes of ballet, and expressed themselves through 'natural', seemingly improvised, unbound movement.

⁹³ One of many responses to Duncan's movement can be seen in Merce

⁹² I use this term to refer to the broad range of dance styles and techniques considered as contemporary dance, and acknowledge the complexity of the notion.

⁹³ See Daly (1995) for a detailed consideration of Duncan's work, including consideration of the notions of the 'natural' and 'expressive' body.

Cunningham's strict formalism, and deliberate inexpressiveness, thus demonstrating how the genre is not describable in relation to a specific stylistic character, or choreographic approach.

Although we tend to think of dance works as 'choreographed', this term does not describe a specific set of actions. Contemporary dance is made in a wide variety of ways, however there are some overlapping strategies, such as; improvisation, chance procedure, rules, tasks, responding to stimuli, embodying concepts, constructing ideal forms, narratives, political messages, and so on. Although these strategies are shared, taught and borrowed they also constantly evolve and are multiple in nature. There is no standardised choreographic practice or method and each artist develops idiosyncratic approaches.

Initially it might seem that the multiple forms of choreographic process perhaps contribute to the desire to share strategies. However, as previously mentioned, there have been multiple approaches used for some time, meaning that other reasons must be at play. In this chapter I consider whether the examples discussed could be seen as motivated by artists' desire to claim more value in their work, through exposing the labour, logic and intelligence of their processes. Traditionally value judgements of dance are focussed on two major components, the work and the performance, the judgment of which may be distinct. For example it is possible to see a bad performance of a good work, and vice versa. However, scoring and performing process reconfigures this relationship as viewers encounter more than the final product of performance.

Knowledge Economies and Commodity Forms

The increased interest in articulating choreographic processes can be attributed to a number of factors. For example, the increased acceptance of practice-as-research in UK Higher Education means that dance artists working within these contexts are often required to find ways to articulate the research-ful nature of their practice.⁹⁴ Although these projects are not solely developed within, or funded by Universities,⁹⁵ this shift towards valuing choreographic practice can be seen to contribute significantly to the context of their production.

The motivations for the development of ‘choreographic objects’ are considered by Leach, whose background in Social Anthropology gives him a particular interest in how they generate relations between people. Writing in 2006, prior to the AHRC ‘choreographic objects’ project Leach suggests,

[i]n the face of dazzling technology, it is easy to miss the point that what the technology enables are collaborations and combinations of people’s work and ideas in new ways. Collaboration is obviously at the heart of what drives value forward in the “information society” and the “knowledge economy” (Leach 2006: 447).

Although not writing specifically about ‘choreographic objects’ here, these insights are important for demonstrating the framework through which he writes. Leach reads

⁹⁴ See Pakes (2009)

⁹⁵ There are links between these objects and particular Universities. For example, scholars from OSU were instrumental in the development of Synchronous Objects. Furthermore, Scott deLahunta is a Senior Research Fellow at Coventry University.

the objects through a specific lens, focussed on the nature of relationships and transaction. This is an important perspective to consider, as philosophical notions of artistic value are not the only system at play in the making and reception of 'choreographic objects'. The value of the objects for those who make and use them is intrinsically linked to the exchange that occurs between artists and researchers as well as the artist, object, researcher and receiver.

Leach suggests that knowledge is another key component in the value of the object. Writing in 2013, he suggests that the relationship between knowledge and value is a key motivation for the development of 'choreographic objects', proposing that they are the result of a concern by contemporary dance practitioners to demonstrate the knowledge producing nature of the form. He suggests that,

[t]he emergence in the last two decades of publications of choreographic ideas indexes a real desire on the part of leading choreographers to show that choreography is an intelligent and creative practice that has its own language and sense (Leach 2013: 6).

Leach's interpretation of the motivations for 'choreographic objects' suggests that such projects are a product of dance's on-going drive to demonstrate the seriousness of its worth. The way that dance possesses its 'own language and sense' referred to by Leach is often considered the form's downfall, in that the particular form of bodily knowledge that dance making generates is considered difficult to articulate through language. For example, in Chapter One (p.13) I discuss Klein's suggestion that theories on modern art see dance as 'other', and therefore dance knowledge is seen as an 'other' type of knowledge, "a form whose physical nature prohibits discourses about it" (Klein 2007: 28).

According to Klein, the physical ‘otherness’ of embodied dance knowledge presents a challenge for those wishing to share and articulate it.

Why then face this challenge? Leach outlines the ‘internal’ and ‘external’ motivations for artists and researchers to undertake the projects. Referring to articulations from Forsythe, Leach suggests that internal motivations arose from, “a strong assertion that the practice has huge value, but is restricted to a small audience” (Leach 2013: 6). Here he suggests that sharing ‘choreographic knowledge’ with a larger audience is a motivating factor for artists. This claim aligns with the external motivations proposed by Leach, who suggests that these objects are the product of the ‘knowledge economy’, explaining that,

[t]he governments of the countries in which these contemporary dance companies are situated promote the ‘knowledge economy’ (Drucker 1969; Castells & Cardoso 2005). For them ‘knowledge’ has become a value term in its own right, denoting something that people (should) strive to produce, strive to have recognised, to evaluate, rank, and transact (Leach 2013: 6-7).

Leach suggests here that in order for dance making to be acknowledged as a knowledge-rich activity within the current cultural climate, ‘choreographic knowledge’ needs to be expressed in a sharable and recognisable form. This suggestion is echoed by Klein, who suggests that “[i]n the globalised world of the 21st century, knowledge is considered the key to prosperity, influence and power” (2007: 26). The primarily bodily nature of ‘choreographic knowledge’, combined with the pressures of Leach’s ‘knowledge economy’ point to a socio-cultural incentive for artists to develop sharable modes of transmitting dance knowledge in order to

demonstrate the value of their work to audiences in accordance with political structures.

Democratising Components

As demonstrated in previous chapters, the performance of the work, manifest through recordings, is only one component of the scores. Although they often function as source material, the recordings and films of the works are not given pride of place in the design of the scores. For example, *Using the Sky* features boxes containing text, recordings and diagrams that overlap one another. Every page contains multiple sections of relatively equal size. The viewer is not explicitly directed towards one set of properties over any other. The result of this is that physical instances of the work, manifest in recorded documentation, are presented as equally significant to interviews, written accounts, diagrammatic forms and so on, helping to draw attention to the knowledge-rich nature of dance making and performance.

The reorganisation and democratisation of the work's features through the 'choreographic object' can be seen to relate to theatre scholar Hans Thies Lehmann's discussion of the non-hierarchical arrangement of theatrical signs, which he suggests is typical of 'Post-Dramatic Theatre' (2006). Lehmann states, "[t]he dehierarchization of theatrical means is a universal principle of post-dramatic theatre. The non-hierarchical structure blatantly contradicts tradition" (Lehmann 2006: 86).

Echoing Lehmann's descriptions, the structure and organisation of the components on *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky* do not follow a hierarchical structure.

Considering how the democratisation of signs impacts on perception, Lehmann draws a comparison with painting. He suggests that

[w]hat happens here within the medium of painting can also be found in manifold ways in postdramatic theatrical practice: different genres are combined in a performance (dance, narrative theatre, performance, etc.); all means are employed with equal weighting; play, object and language point simultaneously in different directions of meaning and thus encourage a contemplation that is at once relaxed and rapid. The consequence is a changed attitude on the part of the spectator (Lehmann 2006: 87).

This description of distributed attention can be applied to the process of encountering the scores, as users are required to engage in active contemplation. Clearly, this characteristic is not unique to 'choreographic objects', yet thinking about how the construction of meaning is altered is of interest. In a live performance context the viewer is in direct contact with the work. However, encountering the work via the 'choreographic object' the viewer is presented with three articles, the performance, the work and the object itself. Furthermore, the work is exposed as a multi-layered web of physical and non-physical instances, reconfigured into a new form of object. Attention is thus triangulated between three objects, and across an abundance of metaphysical, epistemological and kinaesthetic properties.

Lehmann suggests that the result of the non-hierarchical organisation of signs is that perception remains open. He draws on the term 'evenly hovering attention' used by psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud to characterize the interaction between the analyst and

their patient (Lehmann 2006: 87). He explains that this form of interaction relies upon non-immediate understanding, and that perceiving 'Post-Dramatic Theatre' also involves the postponement of the acquisition of meaning. This observation can be equally applied to encountering 'choreographic objects'. No individual component makes absolute sense of the work when encountered alone. Thus viewers' attention must be active, yet hovers across elements, building a picture of the work and developing understanding of its signs and significance.

Value and Labour

One of the unifying features of 'choreographic objects' is that they demonstrate a concern for showing how dance making and performance involves more than the mere movement of a body in space. The use of interviews, documents from the creative process, detailed annotations of relations and so on, serve to present dance as a complex interplay of ideas and systems, demanding both cognitive and physical labour. A primary example of this is Hay's repeated discussion of her "daily practice" (Hay in Motion Bank 2013). She emphasises her commitment to repeatedly working with a set of ideas. Similarly it is explained how the 'executants' of Hay's score were required to commit to the daily practice for a period of three months. This is a characteristic of Hay's approach to dance making, further demonstrated by the requirements of her 'Solo Performance Commissioning Project'. In interviews on *Using the Sky*, Hay emphasises the repetition and extended time frame of her practice, drawing attention to the amount of work required to create, interpret and instantiate the work (Hay in Motion Bank 2013).

The way in which Hay refers to her process as a 'practice' suggests that she does not work towards finishing a product, rather that her relationship with herself and her work is in a constant state of exploration. Yet, it is stable enough to be taught and adopted by those who undertake renditions of her scores. It relates closely to Thrift's description of artistic practice as,

understood as material bodies of work or styles that have gained enough stability over time, through for example, the establishment of corporeal routines and specialised devices, to reproduce themselves (Thrift 2008: 8).

This certainly seems to describe Hay's approach and portrays the notion of practice as it is usually understood. It should be made clear that Hay's use of the term 'practice' is distinct from 'rehearsal'. Many dance works are stabilised through practicing a certain set of steps or repeating routines. Rehearsals are usually product oriented, directed towards the construction and stabilising of a performance event, yet Hay's practice involves exploration and an on-going enquiry into particular facets of dance. That is not to say that Hay's practice does not generate a performance product of a dance work. Indeed her practice itself is stabilised through repetition, demonstrated by her sharing of it through teaching, discussion and writing.⁹⁶ The key point here is that rehearsals involve practice, but that not all practice is a rehearsal.

Arguably, the stability of Hay's practice is achieved through the type of established corporeal routines referred to by Thrift (2008: 8). Furthermore, the development of

⁹⁶ *Lamb at the Altar: The Story of a Dance* (1994); *My Body, The Buddhist* (2000)

the ‘choreographic object’ relates to Thrift’s description, by offering a “specialised device” (2008:8) through which Hay’s practice — or at least an account of it — is reproduced. This explanation from Thrift helps to demonstrate Hay’s suggestion during ‘The Continuity of Discontinuity’ that *Using the Sky* extends her practice (Hay 2013).

To return to the key point; the reproduction of practice via the ‘choreographic object’ foregrounds the temporal, cognitive and physical commitment required in the processes of making and interpreting Hay’s choreographies. This is further demonstrated on *Using the Sky* by the inclusion of written insights from the performers. As discussed in previous chapters, the alignment of recorded interpretations and written insights allows the user to acknowledge the experience of the performer, offering another way to acknowledge and appreciate the level of cognitive and physical labour involved in the performance.

How then does the re-configuration of performance, knowledge and exchange impact on the way in which the work is valued? As previously demonstrated, ‘choreographic objects’ call for users to acknowledge the role of labour and knowledge, meaning that value judgments will respond to more than the performance event. Indeed, this may be seen as a motivational factor in the creation of these types of objects: revealing the complexity of process may encourage spectators to value the work, even if they do not value the aesthetic properties of the performance. For example, comprehending the repeated practice required to instance Hay’s work, is likely to

lead the viewer to value the work is a different way. This suggestion can be seen to relate to a Marxist view of value, as intrinsically related to labour. Marx suggests that,

[i]f then we leave out of consideration the use value of commodities, they have only one common property left, that of being products of labour (Marx 1887: 28).

Marx's theory proposes that the value of a commodity directly depends upon the labour taken to produce it (1887: 28). He focuses specifically on the *quantity* of the labour, suggesting that,

[w]e see then that that which determines the magnitude of the value of any article is the amount of labour socially necessary, or the labour time socially necessary for its production (Marx 1887: 28).

Under this paradigm, the amount of labour required to generate an object directly correlates with its value. So does the quantity of choreographic labour undertaken inform the value of a dance? It is possible to argue that we are unlikely to consider a piece of choreography developed in five minutes as equally valuable to a work cultivated over three months. However, the two do not directly correlate. A work is not, *by necessity* more valuable solely because it took a long time to develop. Indeed, paradoxically, a good work made in a short amount of time may be considered impressive or valuable partly because it was developed so quickly. Therefore, Marx's theory does not directly apply. However, I suggest that although the quantity of labour does not directly inform the value of the work, the articulation of process via 'choreographic objects' suggests that the *quality* of the labour does become

significant in our perception of the work, reiterating the central role of ‘choreographic knowledge’. Processes that are revealed as possessing valuable qualities, such as being particularly innovative, thoughtful, inclusive and so on are likely to positively inform our judgments of the work. For example, in the case of *No Time to Fly*, comprehending the depth of thinking and practice required of the ‘executant’, allows the viewer to see that the movement is not random or meaningless, despite being non-representational. Rather, it is underpinned by complex cognitive and physical processes. This is likely to lead to an acknowledgment that the work has valuable features, even if it does not necessarily lead the viewer to favour Hay’s style over any other. This suggestion returns us back to the notion that value is related to ‘choreographic knowledge’, and therefore that the distribution of this form of knowing might open up Hay’s work to a wider audience.

Performing Process

The foregrounding of labour and knowledge is also demonstrated in live performance. *Table of Contents* (Davies 2014), is a durational performance, which takes place in gallery settings. Performances of the work involve Davies and her company recalling and re-enacting moments, memories and traces of Davies’ previous works. Sections of structured movement and tasks are broken up by gatherings of the audience and company around a large table, which is frequently moved to a different part of the space. During these gatherings the performers explain what will follow, and map their intended pathways through space on the table in chalk. The events pose multiple philosophical questions, not least regarding the conventions of performance, and the

notion of spectatorship. My attention here, however, is on the way that *Table of Contents* relates to a tradition of foregrounding process in performance, arising in the postmodern work of Judson Dance Theatre, and echoing the priorities of ‘process’ artists such as Richard Serra.

Similarly to *Using the Sky*, *Table of Contents* offers many ways for the spectator to share in the internal world of the performers. For example, performer Rachel Krische responds in movement to a recorded talk by dance artist Gill Clarke, which is played through headphones passed between audience members, allowing access to a shared aural world. Meanwhile Charlie Morrissey and Andrea Buckley talk their way through an improvised duet.⁹⁷ They explain where their focus is, what “usually happens”, and what they must be aware of at any given point. Similarly, Helke Kaski continuously explains her thought process, repeatedly promising to “shut up in a minute”. Foregrounding of the thoughts, experiences and processes of the performer generates a particular form of spectatorship, grounded in phenomenological awareness of the self and others. Whilst traditional performance modalities present a repeatable object or work for consideration, this approach highlights the non-objective nature of human performance, articulating subjective experiences as they arise. These experiences also demonstrate a form of knowledge that is generated through the experience of performing and making.

⁹⁷ This idea was similarly explored in Philipp Gehmacher’s *Walk + Talk* series, in which he invited ten choreographers to create lecture performances, in which moving and speaking occur simultaneously. See http://oralsite.be/pages/Walk_Talk_Documents

For performers there is likely to be a distinction between performing a set of learned steps, and the process of improvising, or engaging in an activity with unknown results, in which case the dancer is *seemingly* involved in a process of discovery, as opposed to rendition.⁹⁸ The spontaneous generation of movement is perhaps a key feature of some forms of choreographic process, which rely on improvisation on behalf of the dancers. This method may or may not result in the cultivation of a repeatable sequence of movement. In cases where the cognitive and physical processing of stimuli by the dancer is key to the choreographic process, the explicit articulation of the thought processes of the performer can perhaps be seen as a way of disseminating 'choreographic knowledge'. However, the processes being articulated by the performers are not exactly the same thing as Davies' creative processes. Although they are arguably entangled, there is an important distinction. The dancers articulate performative as opposed to choreographic processes. Referring back to *Using the Sky*, this is similar to the distinction between Durning and Warby's insights and Hay's directives. Whilst it is perhaps possible to describe both forms of articulation via the term 'choreographic knowledge', there is a distinction between Davies' and Hay's making process, which are directed towards the construction of the work and the dancers' experiences in performance. Although these distinctions are not absolute and can be blurred, especially if one wishes to argue that the internal processing of the dancers is integral to the process of making the work.

⁹⁸ Although it is important to note that *Table of Contents* is a repeatable work, some elements are unfixed, but others are maintained in each performance.

Performing Labour

The hiding and revealing of the work or labour of dancers in performance has been debated in various contexts. Feminist dance scholarship has considered the traditions of classical ballet in this regard. For example, a debate between Ann Daly (1987) and Jordan and Thomas (1994), equates the hiding and revealing of the ballerina's physical labour as indicative of American ballet choreographer George Balanchine's representation of women. In a different context, the priorities of Judson Dance Theatre, summarised in Rainer's seminal 'No Manifesto' (1965) discussed in Chapter Two (p.49), challenged the traditions of dance, imploring an approach that does not offer illusions, or fantasies, but that demonstrates the reality of the form (1965: 178).

Elements of *Table of Contents* are reminiscent of Rainer's seminal work *Room Service*, discussed in Chapter Two (pp.49 – 50). The pedestrian moving of furniture recalls Banes and Carroll's description of the work as involving, "two dancers carrying a mattress up an aisle in the theatre, out one exit and back in through another" (1982: 37). Whilst both works use functional movement, it perhaps goes without saying that the significance of this movement is very different in each instance. *Room Service* can be seen as an exemplar of Rainer's manifesto, and an explicit challenge to the perceived priorities of dance. So successful was the work of Rainer and her contemporaries, such as Robert Dunn and Steve Paxton in pushing perceptions of the form, that knowledgeable dance audiences are unlikely to find the presence of pedestrian movement in Davies' work particularly challenging. Familiarity with the style allows for the work not to be *about* the fact that the dancers are performing

pedestrian actions in performance, rather this is simply utilised as a choreographic strategy. My point is not that Davies deliberately or consciously evoked Rainer, rather that the work can be seen as part of an established trajectory of dance works that do not follow traditional structures regarding the role of the audience and performer, or expectations regarding the movement and behaviour of those who are being observed. Furthermore this tradition encourages the revelation of the labour of performance.

The repeated moving of the table in *Table of Contents* generates a consciousness of the work of the performers. The table is made up of multiple sections, requiring many people to be involved in the process of moving it around the space. It is tall and heavy, constructed of cumbersome wooden blocks. At times individual performers take hold of one end of a unit, waiting for someone to take the other side so that they can move it into its new position. Spectators are suspended, unsure whether to help or not, confused by their role. This discomfort generates a heightened sense of the physical effort of those performing, and the inherent hierarchy between audience and subject. They are working, we are watching. Despite the deconstructed space, and altered performance context, this fact remains – brought into perception through the demonstration of labour.

I suggest that the presentation of physically demanding activities foregrounds the work within the 'work'. This idea is furthered in *Table of Contents* through the way in which the performers plot their space, map out their intentions, and share their experiences. This encourages spectators to engage with features that are usually

hidden in performance. What becomes clear is that the movement is one outcome of a complex and detailed set of experiences. Dance is demonstrated as more than mere movement, which becomes secondary to ideas and experiences. It is possible to suggest that the same is true of Rainer's work, however I disagree. The cultural context of *Room Service* meant that the movement, albeit minimal, purposive and pedestrian, is nevertheless a primary feature of the work. It is within the movement that the concept and political significance resided. In Davies' work, the politics are in the performance of process and the explicit demonstration of the labour required to bring forth the event.

Davies and Rainer's work is motivated by different interests and the comparison is in some ways limited. For example Davies was trained in visual art originally and has made other works for gallery spaces,⁹⁹ so features of her work can equally be seen to arise from visual art traditions. However, the comparison is reflective of the way in which these examples pose similar philosophical questions to conceptual visual art practices arising within the same historical and cultural context as Rainer's work. The 1950s and 60s saw a shift towards concept-driven visual art works, perhaps most famously exemplified in the work of artists such as Marcel Duchamp and Andy Warhol. 'Conceptual Art' is a broad term, covering a range of artistic practices and priorities. However, it can perhaps be loosely summarised by artist Sol LeWitt's suggestion that, "[t]he idea becomes the machine that makes the art" (LeWitt in

⁹⁹ Such as *The Collection* (2009) at the Victoria Miro Gallery in London. Siobhan Davies Dance has published a text addressing this relationship, alongside dance practitioner and scholar Sara Wookey called *Who Cares? Dance in the Gallery & Museum*.

Kosuth 1969: 4). In other words, conceptual art is driven by the demonstration of a particular idea, as opposed to the creation of an ideal aesthetic form.

A subset of the 'Conceptual Art' movement, arising in the mid 1960s is the genre of 'Process Art'. The Guggenheim museum characterise the movement as emphasising, "the "process" of making art (rather than any predetermined composition or plan) and the concepts of change and transience" (Guggenheim, n.d.). Artists such as Jackson Pollock and Richard Serra are seen to belong to this category. Their creative processes became the subject of the art product, as demonstrated by Pollock's multiple drip paintings, and Serra's work *Verb List Compilation: Actions Related to Oneself*" (1967 – 1968),¹⁰⁰ each of which use the process of making as the primary content of the work.

Verb List Compilation: Actions Related to Oneself is a list, formulated by Serra, of 107 verbs. It starts: " To roll, to crease, to fold" (2012: 102). The actions derived from the behaviour of the body in the process of art making. The method of list making can be seen as a mode of systematising the creative process. Serra generated an art product through describing and organising observations about process, conflating process and product. The political and creative motivations for this work are aligned with Rainer's and Davies' exposure of process. The plotting of the choreographic plan on the table, for example, echoes Serra's presentation of verbs describing his process. Incidentally,

¹⁰⁰ Reprinted in Lepecki, A (ed.) (2012).

Serra's work has been used as a choreographic stimulus by Wayne McGregor;¹⁰¹ demonstrating the way in which sharing artistic processes can extend knowledge across artistic disciplines.

In an interview with artist Liza Bear, Serra states, "I think the significance of the work is in its effort not its intentions" (1980: 36). The foregrounding of the process shifts notions of value from the final work, to the labour of making. Serra and Pollock were not the first artists to use process as content. Klein addresses this topic in collaboration with performance theorist Bojana Kunst (2012). They claim that artistic work has been the subject of some artistic productions since the development of 'fine' art at the end of the eighteenth century (2012: 1). Furthering this genealogy, they suggest that the broad field of 'performance' that emerged in the 1960s has often included reflection upon artistic practice (2012: 1). Serra's work can be seen as an example of this, as he suggests that art can be conceptualised as an activity, as opposed to being oriented solely towards the achievement of a certain goal, thus implicating art as performative.

However, Klein and Kunst suggest the examination of artistic practices within performance changed in the 1990s. They claim that recent critical performance work is more focussed upon collaboration, experimentation, research and discourse and that such practices challenge hierarchical and institutional structures (2012: 1). They argue that, "[o]ne of the important aesthetic and political outcomes of these

¹⁰¹ The work was used as a stimulus for the development of *UNDANCE* (2011) (McGregor | Random Dance n.d.)

explorations is that labour has become visible in performance work” (2012: 1), thus further reiterating the way that ‘choreographic objects’ and *Table of Contents* are indicative of current socio-cultural frameworks.

The confluence of process and product in *Table of Contents* is perhaps more complex than in Serra’s work due to the way in which dance performance is perceptually linked with human processes. Whilst scholars such as David Davies (2004) suggest that all art is essentially performative, the performing arts involve the display of human process in more explicit ways than the visual art tradition, as the body is both the vehicle for making and the subject of the work. In cases such as *Table of Contents*, the processes of making and performance are entwined, the confluence of which serve to draw the labour of dance sharply into focus.

Performing Choreographic Knowledge

A related example is provided by *Rebelling Against Limit* (2014), which is a lecture-performance by Burrows, and Fargion.¹⁰² Described as a “sermon on structure” (Burrows and Fargion 2014), the event involves Burrows reciting a series of observations regarding the role of scores and structures in their work. This monologue is accompanied by animated sketches by Peter Rapp, which are projected onto a screen behind Burrows, while Fargion plays the piano.

¹⁰² The work was created for the Tanzkongress in Düsseldorf in 2013.

Burrows talks the audience through the works of the long-term collaborators. The structure of the score for each work is explained and illustrated. The process of ordering and performing each piece is revealed, echoing Leach's suggestion that 'choreographic objects', can be read as "reverse engineering the final product - the dance piece – to show its component parts" (2013: 7). In this context the work involves the dissection of previous works, generating a complex form of self-referential, analytic and intertextual performative event. Dance critic Flora Wellesley Wesley suggests the format "allows us to catch a glimpse of another aspect of the work beyond the art object" (2013). However, I suggest that the work behind the art object *is* the art object. Thus, herein is another example of the conflation of process and product.

Interestingly, and perhaps paradoxically, Burrows makes it clear that the work involved in making performance works is not structured in the same way as the final score, and resulting performances. Therefore through foregrounding the structures of their scores, Burrows and Fargion articulate the process of performing as opposed to making. This approach is akin to Davies' work, which is also concerned with demonstrating the process and structures of the performance artefact, as opposed to reflecting upon the creative journey that generated the work. Both *Table of Contents* and *Rebelling Against Limit* adopt non-conventional approaches to dance making however they are also aligned with established performative and artistic traditions, which challenge convention, meaning that the format is not the sole focus of the work. I suggest that, although presented in very different ways, both works exemplify some of the key characteristics of 'choreographic objects' outlined by Leach. Through

the performance of choreographic processes ‘choreographic knowledge’ is foregrounded, thus encouraging the audience to value the work behind the work and demonstrating the priorities of ‘knowledge economies’. The point of this analogy is not to suggest that either artist has accidentally constructed a ‘choreographic object’, rather it is to demonstrate how the objects share political, artistic and research motivations with dance works currently being performed. Thus demonstrating how the incentives of the three case studies mirror broader artistic and cultural concerns relating to the value of knowledge and labour.

Davies and Burrows and Fargion have been involved in the development of ‘choreographic objects’. Davies’ online archive *RePlay*, discussed in Chapter Three (pp.78 – 79) was one of the first objects to be developed in the field. Furthermore, it played a central role in the making of *Table of Contents*, serving as a resource for the restaging and development of fragments of Davies’ previous works. Burrows and Fargion have developed a Motion Bank score called *Seven Duets*, which compiles sections of many of their duets in order to consider links between them (Burrows in Motion Bank 2013). Indeed deLahunta explains that *Rebelling Against Limit* fed into the development of the object (2014b). The involvement of these artists in such projects suggests a further link between ‘choreographic objects’ and their performance work. It is possible to suggest that the consideration of their processes involved in the development of the objects has a causal effect on their creative practice, drawing attention to the value associated with the knowledge, structures and labour of performing and promoting a desire to share these features.

Here we should turn our attention to Leach's suggestion that;

[a]t this juncture then, contemporary dance has found itself, through internal and external motivations, justifying its practice as a form of knowledge production. The need to show the knowledge aspect of contemporary dance requires something other than the performance (Leach 2013: 7).

The suggestion that 'choreographic objects' are evidence of dance justifying itself though demonstrating the knowledge it produces can equally be applied to both of the examples discussed. Although *Table of Contents* and *Rebelling Against Limit* are performative works, the foregrounding of structure and labour indicating a desire to show something 'other than performance'.

Another way that these works contribute to and mirror the broader cultural context is demonstrated through the centralising of the choreographer's voice. As Leach points out, "[c]ontemporary dance practitioners are experimenting with forms of self – presentation" (2013: 9). This 'self-presentation' is evidenced in the way that Davies chose to return to her previous work, to reflect upon and re-present her personal archive. Burrows and Fargion also chose to focus on their previous work. Furthermore both choreographers perform in their works, demonstrating a desire to present themselves, both literally and figuratively. Whilst Burrows has always performed in his own work, Davies has done so far less frequently.¹⁰³ As with Hay and De Keersmaeker, Davies' decision to claim presence within the work is interesting. All three choreographers have been making work for many decades, so what is it that

¹⁰³ This claim is made in response to evaluating information on *RePlay*.

has driven this desire for self-presentation? Alongside political and economic incentives, this presentation can be read in accordance with Leach's notion of 'self preservation' at the heart of 'choreographic objects'. As they approach the end of their working lives the choreographers are explicitly claiming ownership of their work through preservation, poetics and performance.

Summary

'Choreographic objects' and the performance of process call for viewers to appreciate both the product of performance and the depth of the making and performing processes. This may be seen as a motivational factor in the creation of these types of objects. Revealing the complexity of process might encourage spectators to value the work of the choreography, even if the final product is not to their taste. Furthermore, the foregrounding of knowledge generates value that is distinct from the work's aesthetic features. As Leach, writing with anthropologist Richard Davis suggests, knowledge is itself a value term; "there is a transformation of value in the contemporary world when something is labelled, 'knowledge' (whether accurately or otherwise)" (Leach and Davis 2012: 212).

Klein and Kunst suggest that the emphasis on knowledge arises from the pressure of socio-economic crisis, suggesting that under recent pressure contemporary society has undergone a restructuring of values and a revaluation of artistic work (2012: 2).

They suggest,

[i]n these social and economic framings, a need to rethink the processes of making performance art exists as well as a need to connect it to questions of labour. Any reflection on the process of labour is therefore deeply connected with ways in which the artist's role is re-evaluated through the economic and political crisis, especially in relation to current cultural and political discussions about the applicability of knowledge and imaginative creative practices (Klein and Kunst 2012: 2).

Considering the context of their production and drawing on discourse from Social Anthropology has shown how 'choreographic objects' relate to the context of their production.

Drawing on performative examples has demonstrated how the foregrounding of choreographic process occurs within the broader cultural context of 'choreographic objects'. This chapter has helped to gain a deeper sense of what these objects are, and how they reframe spectatorial engagement with dance. Crucially, the focus on knowledge and labour highlight how they challenge traditional aesthetic theories about the value and appreciation of art. The next chapter further explores this topic, considering the role of knowledge in the perception of the work and asking how 'choreographic objects' challenge empiricist perspectives regarding the appreciation of art.

Chapter Twelve: Choreographic Knowledge and Aesthetic Empiricism

Introduction

The way that 'choreographic objects' foreground process, alongside performance,, reveals a wide range of the work's properties. For example, features such as choreographic labour and variability in performance are highlighted in a way that is not possible in a singular encounter of the work in live performance. This is a phenomenon that is facilitated by the use of technology. Articulations from choreographers and dancers are often presented alongside, or integrated into recordings, thus highlighting the ways in which 'choreographic knowledge' is embedded within movement. But how does this inform perception? This chapter focuses in more depth on the question, how do 'choreographic objects' inform spectatorial engagement with dance? I consider how the dissemination of choreographic process and the subsequent acquisition of 'choreographic knowledge' problematises traditional theories in Analytic Philosophical Aesthetics regarding the perception of art. I examine the concept of 'aesthetic empiricism',¹⁰⁴ which claims that the proper appreciation of art concerns engagement only with those properties present in the direct and immediate encounter with a work, and demonstrate how this notion is challenged through choreographers publically sharing their processes. Drawing on David Davies' *Art as Performance* (2004), I test the applicability of aesthetic empiricism in relation to dance examples, paying particular attention to questions posed by 'choreographic objects'.

¹⁰⁴ Both Davies (2004) and Lamarque (2010) suggest that this term was coined by Currie (1989).

Knowledge and Expertise

As previously mentioned, the documentation of dance has conventionally been focused on the event of performance. Notation and recordings alike inscribe the public, physical manifestation of the work. Historically non-performance documents have tended to remain behind the scenes, perhaps saved in performance archives, but often discarded and disregarded. The prioritising of performances and recordings over other forms of document is reflective of the hierarchy of the work's instances, discussed in Chapter Five (122 – 124) with live performance 'tokens' considered the primary way of accessing the work (Sparshott 1995; McFee 1992, 2011; Pakes 2013). This may be followed by various forms of performance documentation, with the remnants of process and rehearsal situated at the bottom of the metaphorical pile. Furthermore, metaphysical features, such as repetition and variability in performance have often been seen as a problem for dance,¹⁰⁵ documentation methods have strived to iron-out the complexity of dance's multiple instances. However, as previously discussed 'choreographic objects' foreground contextual and provenance related features, such as the artist's intention and the circumstance of the work's making.

¹⁰⁵ For example, this is the primary topic of *Preservation Politics* (2000), edited by Stephanie Jordan.

Zuniga Shaw succinctly articulates the shared aims of ‘choreographic objects’,

[w]ith very different outcomes, each of these projects is concerned with the idiosyncratic nature of choreographic knowledge and with discovering new possibilities for tracing and transmitting ideas contained within the specific dance practices of each artist (Zuniga Shaw 2011: 207).

This observation raises a key question; what is ‘choreographic knowledge’? Pakes asks; “[w]hat does choreography have to do with knowledge?” (2009: 10). She suggests that recent debates regarding practice-as-research have raised questions about the type of knowledge generated through choreography, and the way that this is shared (2009: 10). Drawing on Gilbert Ryle’s (1963) discussion of the distinction between knowing *how* and knowing *that*, Pakes suggests that,

[k]nowing how to make a dance work is distinct from being able to analyse existing choreography or explain how and why it is effective (Pakes 2009: 11).

It certainly seems as though there are different forms of knowledge acquired, and available to, makers, performers and spectators of dance. What exactly constitutes knowledge is a very large area of enquiry, for the sake of ease, here I will work with a simple conception of the term, as used to refer to familiarity with a certain subject, theory and so on, or to refer to information, facts, skills and so forth. I acknowledge that knowledge may arise from doing, seeing and thinking, or a combination of these things.

Importantly ‘choreographic knowledge’ does not only belong to the choreographer, but also to those who perform the work. This is made clear on *Synchronous Object* and *Using the Sky*, both of which include testimony from the dancers.¹⁰⁶ So, in very simple terms, I suggest that ‘choreographic knowledge’ generally refers to:

- 1.) Skills or information acquired or utilised by a choreographer through the process of making (a) dance.
- 2.) Skills or information acquired or utilised by dancers regarding the process of performing (a) dance.

Of course 1 and 2 may refer to the same person in instances where the choreographer also performs the work. What is significant is that the term does not seem to refer to knowledge produced through the non-directed observation of a dance work. It refers to knowledge that arises from ‘inside’.

Pakes’s discussion of Ryle’s distinctions poses an important question, if knowing *that* a work is effective is possible without knowing *how* it was made, why share ‘choreographic knowledge’? As discussed in Chapter Eleven there are many socio-political reasons for the motivation to disseminate this form of knowledge, however, my interest here is in the implied motivation to encourage users to see inside the

¹⁰⁶ The lack of dancer testimony in *A Choreographer’s Score* is discussed by Karreman (2014b).

work. The drive to share 1 and 2 suggest that there can be a third conception of choreographic knowledge that is:

3.) Skills or information acquired by a spectator based on 1 and/or 2.

The claim that 'choreographic knowledge' can be shared is contentious; one might wish to argue that the forms of knowledge that arise from doing are only accessible through doing. Or, that 3 is by necessity not equal to 1 and/or 2. In some ways the notion of 'choreographic knowledge' relates to Melrose's discussion about expert intuition and mastery (2009), however Melrose maintains that such expertise is not available to the spectator (2009: 29).

Related questions are posed regarding the skills and knowledge of the spectator. Those with experience of doing are perhaps better equipped to access 'choreographic knowledge' than those with no experience of performing choreography, even if they have not experienced the specific form of making being articulated. As previously discussed (p.53), Melrose distinguishes between the expert-practitioner and expert spectator. She describes watching dance performances alongside practitioner Rosemary Butcher, suggesting that as an expert-practitioner, Butcher sees *the other side of the dancer* (2009: 23-24), while Melrose can only see "the side I actually see" (2009: 24). This observation suggests that Butcher may be better poised to access knowledge arising from inside the work. However, does this necessarily put her in a privileged position? A question is posed as to whether the skills of the spectator are enhanced by acquiring the knowledge of the expert-practitioner.

The development of ‘choreographic objects’ implies that access to internal features of the work, such as the intentions and experiences of the choreographer and performers, is likely to improve the abilities of spectators to ‘see’ or appreciate the work, however, the question remains: how can this knowledge be shared and accessed? The examination of ‘choreographic knowledge’ is an epistemological endeavour. Davies suggests that,

[e]pistemology in general is concerned with the nature of knowledge and the conditions under which it is possible. By extension, epistemology of art is concerned with the nature of artistic appreciation and understanding and the conditions under which *it* is possible (Davies 2004: 26).

The transmission of ‘choreographic knowledge’ foregrounds what Davies describes as a central concern in the epistemology of art,

the relationship between the generative act that brings a work into existence and the receptive act that is a proper appreciation of that work (Davies 2004: 26).

Of particular interest here is the relationship between *knowledge of* the generative act and ‘proper appreciation’.¹⁰⁷ The claim that the acquisition of ‘choreographic knowledge’ enhances an audience’s experience of the work¹⁰⁸ might seem straightforward given the priorities of knowledge-oriented western cultures.

¹⁰⁷ This relates to debates around ‘cognitivism’, which are addressed in relation to in dance by McFee (2011: 235 – 268).

¹⁰⁸ Although this claim is not explicitly stated in the literature on the objects it is implied, to varying degrees by deLahunta (2013a), Leach (2013) and Zuniga Shaw (2014)

Suggesting that understanding and appreciation are linked seems to be reflective of our practices. For example, as one learns about an object, idea and so on, we are likely to comprehend differently its relevance, intelligence, physical wonder and so forth. This certainly seems to be the case for natural objects. For example, learning that the rings on a tree trunk signify age, might generate admiration for the wonders of nature, the age of the tree and so on. The popularity of nature programmes, for example further suggests that knowledge of natural kinds is closely linked to appreciation. Whether or not one is interested in nature, it would seem strange to claim that knowledge of the natural world could in any way damage or limit one's enjoyment and/or appreciation of it. However, the case of artworks it is more complicated. Conventional theories of art appreciation, dating back to Kant (1781), commonly suggest that art should be perceived, appreciated, valued and judged merely on the aesthetic experience that it affords. Specifically, that knowledge external to the physical experience of the work is not relevant. This view, labelled 'aesthetic empiricism', is defined by Davies as the term used for,

epistemologies of art that minimize the role, in artistic appreciation, of resources not available or derivable from an immediate encounter with an instance of a work (Davies 2004: 25).

Davies uses the concept of the "manifest work" (2004: 27) to refer to the work as it is encountered directly. He describes the term as,

an entity that comprises only properties available to a receiver in an immediate perceptual encounter with an object or event that realises the work (Davies 2004: 27).

Applying this concept to dance is not entirely straightforward. As previously discussed (pp.29 – 30, 111) Carr (1987) and McFee (2011), suggest that dance works are fundamentally dependent upon the physical presence of the human body and are therefore only accessible in performance, thus viewing of the manifest work depends upon seeing the work live. However, I suggest that in the case of dance, the manifest work may be encountered via dance film or recording, as well as conventionally ‘live’ performances.

Conflated Properties

A significant component in the empiricism debate concerns ‘aesthetic’ and ‘artistic’ properties. The two notions are used by aestheticians to draw a distinction between properties that are perceptible in the work alone and those that are extraneous to the manifest work, but that are crucial for its status as an artwork. For example, McFee 2005: 368 – 369), discusses how we might attend to the aesthetic properties of both a painting and the wallpaper on the wall upon which it hangs, but that we would value the two things differently, because the painting possesses artistic properties, related to its construction and presentation, that make it an artwork. This distinction between aesthetic and artistic properties might help to further comprehend the relationship between the work and the ‘choreographic object’, as we can consider which features of the work are accessible through the digital rendering. There is some dispute about exactly what constitutes aesthetic properties. However,

Jerrold Levinson suggests that,

[i]t is widely agreed that aesthetic properties are perceptual or observable properties, directly experienced properties, and properties relevant to the aesthetic value of the properties that possess them (Levinson 2003: 6).

A traditional conception of aesthetic properties includes characteristics such as beauty, grace, balance, harmony and form. A broader range of qualities is now acknowledged, with Levinson (2003: 6) including, wiriness, comicality, sentimentality, gaudiness and vehemence, to name a few. Artistic properties, on the other hand, are those properties that are not aesthetically perceptible, such as the work's context, the identity of the author, and its sociological, cultural or historical significance. Artistic properties is an umbrella term for a wide range of features that derive from a work's provenance related properties, such as a work's context, origin and 'history of production' (Goodman 1976: 122). For example, the cultural context in which a work is made might mean that it possesses the artistic property of being particularly original, shocking or avant-garde.

Whilst the questions posed by extraneous information are not new, digital technology highlights the issue due to the way in which it has been adopted to overlay and merge aesthetic and artistic properties. This is evident in *A Choreographer's Score* in which De Keersmaecker narrates recordings of her work. The vocal description conflates contextual information about the work with the presentation of movement. A similar example is found on *Synchronous Objects*. In the object entitled 'The Dance', the film of the work is surrounded by data that demonstrates the cues and alignments

between the dancers. As previously discussed (p.147), these features are also demonstrated by real-time annotations, laid over the top of the movement. The viewer can select which of the annotations to view. The film can also be accompanied either by ambient sound, the score from the live work by Thom Willem, Forsythe's sung account of the action, or a spoken commentary from Forsythe. The choice of sound significantly informs the viewer's experience of the work. Willems' score provides an atmospheric musical accompaniment, heightening the sense of drama, perhaps invoking a stronger emotive response than when viewing the movement alone. In contrast, the film version initially included only "ambient sound" (Forsythe and OSU 2009), which serves to echo and reflect the sparse nature of the space, and draw attention to the abstract nature of the movement. Forsythe's "sing through" (Forsythe and OSU 2009), focuses the viewer's attention on the rhythms, dynamics and flow of the movement.

The question here is posed: which of these experiences offer purely aesthetic properties and which include the presentation of artistic and provenance related properties? It is perhaps possible to argue that viewing the movement alongside Willems' score provides access to the manifest work, as all of the 'original' properties are maintained. However, this seems problematic. If we are allowing for the manifest work to be encountered through the screen, it seems illogical to suggest that the aesthetic properties must remain exactly the same as those present in the live event. This is especially evident here, as the source material is a filmed version of the work and therefore already possesses different properties to the live work. So, the

question remains; does Forsythe's spoken articulation of the contextual properties of the work become an aesthetic feature of the work equal to the original score?

The conflation of properties is not exclusive to 'choreographic objects'. It is further demonstrated in a recording on You Tube of American choreographer Merce Cunningham's work *Biped* (1999), narrated by *New York Times* dance critic Alistair Macaulay.¹⁰⁹ Macaulay introduces the four-minute film by briefly explaining Cunningham's biography, going on to provide detailed account of the physical and choreographic principles of a solo performed by Banu Ogan. He articulates contextual and artistic properties of the work, in correlation with formal and aesthetic features, which are further demonstrated through video annotation. For example, the image below demonstrates how annotation highlight's Cunningham's use of the torso.

This item has been removed due to 3rd Party Copyright. The unabridged version of the thesis can be found in the Lancaster Library, Coventry University.

Figure 14: Annotation highlighting the position of the torso (contperf 2009)

¹⁰⁹ Uploaded onto YouTube by contperf in 2009. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-QMITsNtxM>

As with *Synchronous Objects*, the annotation draws the viewer's attention to certain features of the movement. But what properties do the annotations have? Perhaps they can be considered to highlight artistic properties – a visual manifestation of 'choreographic knowledge'. However, they become part of our aesthetic experience of the work. The annotation and narrations give artistic properties aesthetic form, blurring the distinction between the two. They offer an experience that has dramatically departed from attending a live performance of the work. However, allowing as I am for recordings to count as instances of the manifest work raises interesting questions; for example, if 'choreographic knowledge' is explicitly articulated within an instance of the work does it become an aesthetic property? And if so, how does this relate to an empiricist view?

Returning to the central argument, the claim that knowledge of choreographic process informs appreciation poses an obvious challenge to an empiricist view. However, a complete rebuttal of empiricism would rest upon proving the claim that knowledge of choreographic process is *essential* to the full appreciation of a dance work; a problematic outcome for dance, as a form conventionally accessed through (live or digital) performance. It seems clear that a moderately empiricist stance might be the solution, meaning the question is posed; what role does this knowledge play in our experience and appreciation of a work?

In response to *Thinking With The Body* (2013), an exhibition examining choreographer Wayne McGregor's process, Stephanie Jordan questions the role of process-based

knowledge in the perception of live work. Indirectly referencing an empiricist view and referring to Pakes, she suggests that,

[t]here is [...] a convincing argument within aesthetics that works of art should be evaluated as autonomous aesthetic objects that embody knowledge (Jordan 2013: 7).

She goes on to talk of the problem of “knowing too much” (2013: 7); citing an example of learning about American choreographer Mark Morris’s process, including being taught part of one of his solos, Jordan suggests that this experience fixed the meaning of the dance, diminishing the alluring ambiguity that she had previously valued (2013: 7). This observation offers a clear counter-argument to the idea that knowing how the work is constructed is superior to knowing why it is effective from a spectator’s position.

Despite these observations, Jordan however does not advocate an empiricist perspective. She suggests that knowledge of a choreographer’s process can, at times be useful, suggesting that understanding Cunningham’s theories and practices is likely to have enhanced her appreciation of his work. Jordan explains how this knowledge helped her, “to accept the moment in a piece, as opposed to thinking about context and future, a more pressured stance” (Jordan 2013: 7). Following Jordan’s discussion it seems tempting to suggest that knowledge of a choreographer’s process might *sometimes* inform appreciation. However, this seems a little unsatisfactory, as it means that the empiricism problem, which rests on whether or not casual and provenance related facts are *essential* to the full appreciation of the work, would be

resolved solely on the basis of subjective experience and opinion. The question would remain as to what it is that makes knowledge of process essential to some works and not others.

The implication of Jordan's example is that Cunningham's work would not be fully or accurately understood without knowledge of his principles, which, given the nature of his work is perhaps a fair outcome. To suggest that this type of knowledge is essential to full appreciation of the work is not to suggest that the work cannot be seen, analysed, valued and so on without such knowledge. However the claim does imply that appreciation would be furthered by the acquisition of provenance related information. Thus, this would be essential for *full* appreciation to take place. Moderate empiricism might suggest that there are some levels and forms of external knowledge that inform appreciation, but that these must be constrained. However, advocating even a moderately empiricist perspective involves subscribing to some features of the strong version of the view, therefore consideration of the counter-arguments is important.

Counter-Arguments to Aesthetic Empiricism

In the case of dance there are three significant counter-arguments to aesthetic empiricism. First, our appreciation of a work may increase retrospectively following

the acquisition of various types of information. My experience of using *A Choreographer's Score* provides a clear example of this.

In 2009 I attended a performance of Rosas danst Rosas (De Keersmaecker 1989) at Sadler's Wells. I recall being moderately affected by the striking simplicity of the work. I also remember being distracted and suspecting that I was missing something — enough knowledge to appreciate the piece perhaps. Years later, consulting A Choreographer's Score greatly informed my appreciation of the work. Learning about the structural properties of the choreography, the detailed and systematic way that De Keersmaecker developed the movement, and the gendered undertones (De Keersmaecker & Cvejić 2012) meant that I was able to appreciate the depth and intelligence of the work. Gaining access to De Keersmaecker's choreographic knowledge retrospectively informed my appreciation of the work.

This account provides a first hand example of the potential relationship between knowledge and value. The acquisition of 'choreographic knowledge' through information external to the physical instantiation of the work has the potential to alter the way that the work is understood. In turn, this might inform the way that it is valued, a shift that can occur after the performance event and even without the need to see the work again.

The second counter-argument is based on the claim that perception is purely aesthetic. Dance audiences possess, to varying degrees, knowledge of artistic and provenance related facts prior to their viewing of the work. As Jordan points out,

[o]ur reception of dance remains a complex and slippery business, as we bring our different backgrounds to bear upon what we encounter (Jordan 2013: 8).

In relation to this, Davies challenges the notion of manifest and non-manifest properties, suggesting that,

[w]hat would be manifest to the untrained observer clearly differs considerably from what would be manifest to an observer possessed of various perceptual and cognitive skills that can be brought to bear upon a work (Davies 2004: 29).

He argues that if one was to claim that the artistic properties of a work are those manifest to a trained observer, a question arises regarding the types of knowledge and skills required to access these properties. Therefore, the manifest work cannot be entirely distinct from knowledge, and therefore does not manifest in the same way to every viewer.

The third rebuttal concerns the philosophical notion of indiscernibles.¹¹⁰ Simply put, this term refers to two objects that are perceptually indistinguishable but that have artistically different qualities, due to variations in their context and the way they came into being. The implication is that artistic properties therefore inform aesthetic ones. For example, if a graffiti artist were to scrawl 'R Mutt 1917' on a urinal in a public toilet, it may result in an object that is perceptually indistinguishable to Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917). Yet, due to its status as an artwork, and the context within which it is viewed, *Fountain* has qualities that make it aesthetically different to other urinals. The implication is that aesthetic properties might 'supervene'¹¹¹ on

¹¹⁰ See Lamarque (2010) for a detailed account of the notion of indiscernibles.

¹¹¹ 'Supervene' is a term used in philosophical literature to describe properties that are in some way dependent on other properties. See Currie (1990) for a detailed explanation of aesthetic supervenience.

artistic ones. Furthermore, this example demonstrates how appropriate appreciation relies upon knowledge of the way the work came into being and therefore depends on the perception of more than physical properties, thus undermining the empiricist view.

A closer examination of indiscernibles is of particular interest in the case of dance works, due to the variability of their instances and the loose identity conditions governing works. It is not possible that there be two exactly similar renditions of the same performance. McFee discusses this issue in relation to the distinction between qualitative and numerical identity (2011: 36). Numerical identity asks whether something is exactly the same thing over time, perhaps in spite of changes to some of its properties, whereas qualitative identity determines whether two objects are qualitatively identical (McFee 2011: 308). McFee suggests that whilst numerical identity questions can be asked of multiple art form tokens, the most significant question of numerical identity will concern the abstract type (2011: 40), and thus will ask whether two performances are the same work.

McFee suggests that we tend to use the word 'identical' to refer to qualitative identity judgments, he uses the example of a watch suggesting, "my watch being identical to yours usually means that both have a Rolex – hence there are two watches!" (McFee 2011: 308).

So, can there be two identical performances? It seems far fetched, yet if this were possible, say in a future where cloning allows for exact duplications of dancers, the

question arises; would two identical performances arising from distinct processes by different authors be of the same work? This thought experiment poses the question; could there be two perceptually identical works, and if so would they automatically be the same work? To argue that two perceptually identical performances must be the same work exemplifies an empiricist stance, suggesting that the features of the performance alone determine its identity. On the other hand, allowing for identical, yet distinct works foregrounds the significance of authorship and context, therefore advocating an anti-empiricist framework. The reason that this scenario is not a practical concern for dance is due to the way in which instantiation depends on the individual the dancer(s) who perform the work there could not be two exactly alike, parallel instances.

However, the potential for indiscernibles is perhaps greater in light of digital technology. Two identical digital works offer a far more likely scenario than the cloning-dependent example outlined previously. In a hypothetical scenario whereby two identical dance films were created, by different choreographers the relevance of provenance related properties might be revealed. Even if the films possessed the same title, the fact that they were authored by different people is potentially enough to validate the claim that they are distinct works, thus attributing a central role to the choreographer in issues of work identity, and demonstrating that it is more than merely aesthetic properties that contribute to the character of a work. This thought experiment can be further stretched: If one of the aesthetically identical films were made not by a choreographer at all, but by a digital artist and displayed in an art exhibition, the work would arguably not count as dance at all. So, the ontology of a

work is also informed by provenance related facts, but how does this impact on appreciation? It seems fair to suggest that we must recognise what kind of work we are engaging with in order to fully appreciate it. This view is supported by Arthur Danto (1964) who contra-empiricism, argues that proper appreciation of art is dependent upon knowledge of the context and tradition in which it occurs.

In agreement with Danto, Stephen Davies advocates a 'contextualist' view of artwork ontology. Suggesting that,

a work's artistically significant properties depend for their existence and character as much on circumstances surrounding the work's creation as on its material features (Davies 2007: III).

It may appear that Davies is advocating the dissemination of provenance related facts. However, it is important to remember that some of the properties surrounding a work are accessible merely through a direct encounter with the manifest work. As the identical digital work example demonstrates, artistic properties are present in the manifest work, insofar as it is presented by an artist within a specific socio-cultural context. However, the suggestion that non-aesthetic properties are of equal significance to aesthetic properties does pose a challenge to the empiricist view. Furthermore, this outcome implies that the knowledge of the viewer informs the identity of the work.

So, how does this ontological argument relate to the acquisition of 'choreographic knowledge'? Thought experiments aside, does the notion of indiscernibles have any significance in relation to our practical engagement with dance works? I suggest it does; digital works not only potentially allow for perceptually indiscernible but distinct works, they also allow for the *same* performance of a work to be re-played exactly. Therefore the concept of digital indiscernibles might be applicable to the repeat playing of a single recording. I will draw an example from encountering *Using the Sky* to demonstrate this idea:

Entering the site I select a recording at random. I observe Jeanine Durning standing in silence the centre of the space. She faces stage left, profile to the camera, she flicks both hands in front of her body, her left foot steps forward, flexed at the ankle. Her right leg joins behind. Her posture relaxes, micro contractions occur in her torso. Her eyes are alert; she looks quickly around the space as if searching for an unidentified sound. Minute movements ripple through her body. Her right shoulder twitches, her head bows, she looks up, then quickly away. Her arms explore space as she moves in a slow, small circle around herself. Durning's gaze is alert, yet inward. There is no explicit meaning, character or narrative to decode. The movement is not virtuosic.

Encountering the manifest work in this way I am not struck by classical aesthetic properties. Although the movement is not un-graceful, it makes no feature of it. The body is not organised into recognisable or symmetrical forms. There is a notable lack of spectacle. However, the work does have aesthetic qualities, such as being introverted and tranquil. There is no narrative or representational meaning to decode. Therefore, the viewer is left to contemplate the significance of this somewhat ambiguous movement event.

Access to Hay's text-score reveals that at this moment in the work Durning is responding to directive 17:

I start spinning, not literally but as a part of an onstage counterclockwise spinning vortex that only I perceive. I am a speck, a dot, a flake, endlessly spiralling toward center stage, and absolutely no one can possibly identify me as such (Hay in Motion Bank 2013).

Re-viewing the recording after reading the directive informs the way the movement is read. Knowledge of the private 'counterclockwise spinning vortex' (Hay in Motion Bank 2013) illuminates Durning's anti-clockwise pathway in space, and her internal focus. The movement appears different — less arbitrary and more measured.

Further exploring the site allows users to watch recorded interviews with Hay in which she articulates some of the principles of her work. In one film she explains the importance of the dancer's perception:

My choreographic work is insisting that the dancer who performs this work notices the potential for feedback from their whole body, and unless they're doing that the dance is not happening (Hay in Motion Bank 2013).

Returning once again to the danced rendition of the work and viewing the movement whilst considering Hay's articulation, further impacts on the way the movement is seen. The non-representational nature of the work is foregrounded. Spectators are able to comprehend that the dancer is focused on receiving feedback from her body, giving the movement greater significance. But what kind of properties are we

responding to? It seems that the revelation that the dancer's experience is essential to the work foregrounds *artistic* properties. For example Hay's articulation provides contextual knowledge, as it situates the work within a somatic tradition.¹¹² The question is then posed as to whether the aesthetic properties of the work supervene on the artistic ones? Does this knowledge alter the aesthetic properties of the work, and if so does this imply that proper appreciation of the work demands knowledge of these properties? This seems to be an essential question for *Using the Sky* and other 'choreographic objects'. It seems fair to suggest that the movement appears different, and that the interviews help us to acknowledge the logic and intelligence of the work.

To claim that proper appreciation requires access to Hay's process is potentially problematic, as the work was seen and presumably appreciated prior to the publication of *Using the Sky*. One solution to this quandary is to suggest that skilled observers, or "expert spectators" (Melrose 2009: 23) of Hay's work, or those with existing knowledge of her process would be able to appreciate the work for its intelligence and logic without assistance from *Using the Sky*. The score, and related 'choreographic objects', therefore serve to make more spectators skilled in the act of appreciation. This anti-empiricist outcome suggests that knowledge of external factors is essential for full appreciation. This view refers back to Davies' previous suggestion that claiming artistic properties of a work are only manifest to trained observers, challenging the notion of the manifest work and raising the question of

¹¹² See Eddy (2009) for a brief history of the 'field' of dance and somatic practice (including a discussion of the relevance of the term 'field').

what type of knowledge is required. It seems, therefore that we have come full-circle here, and a single outcome to the issue is not straightforward. However, this point is important as we should remember that observers may be able to fully appreciate the work without access to the digital score.

Summary

Although the three counter-arguments presented in this chapter demonstrate the weaknesses in a strictly empiricist perspective, the view does have some validity. As previously suggested a complete counter-argument would involve claiming that causal or contextual properties are always essential to fully appreciate a dance work, an outcome that, as Jordan (2013) points out, is not entirely reflective of our practices. Furthermore, dismissing it completely would leave us no closer to understanding the role of 'choreographic knowledge' in the appreciation of dance works. This study moves only some way towards a moderate form of empiricism, and it is possible to suggest that the somewhat inconclusive outcome of the empiricism argument implies that the relationship between the acquisition of 'choreographic knowledge' and appreciation is not entirely clear. Furthermore, this chapter has demonstrated how technology facilitates the conflation of provenance related, artistic and aesthetic properties. I suggest that this reveals features that knowledgeable viewers may have access to without such tools, thus demonstrating how dance works are not solely aesthetic entities, but also comprise artistic, kinaesthetic and metaphysical properties, the recognition of which are dependent upon to the knowledge of the viewer.

Building on the observations about the presentation of the work's properties, the next chapter goes on to think about how the examination of the three case studies reveal ontological features of the dance works they score, and reconfigure our engagement with them. Furthermore, I propose a visual model, designed to help other to examine and theorise 'choreographic objects'.

Chapter Thirteen: Ontological Implications

Introduction

There are two usages of the term 'work' at play in dance discourse and practice, the word refers to both the labour and product of dance making. However, the two uses are interchangeable. Even in contexts where the construction of a stable art object is the primary goal of choreographic activity, the point at which the work of dance making becomes a dance work is not clearly defined. This conflation of labour and product is exposed through scoring strategies that pay equal attention to the process of making and the instance(s) of performance. Equally the inclusion of multiple versions of the work(s) through digital media highlights the metaphysical features of repeatability and performance variability, thus 'choreographic objects' reveal ontological features of the work.

'Choreographic objects' also cultivate a very different version of the work than is shown in performance. So, what does this do to the identity of the work? Does it change with each new expression of it? Whilst identity questions are essentially ontological, here I draw a distinction between those features of the work that concern the nature of its existence, such as the claim that it is an abstract entity, manifest in multiple forms, and identity features, which are those things about the work that make it distinct from other works, such as its form and meaning. Addressing both of these areas, this chapter explores this question; can a dance work change? I return to the type/token terminology, asking how 'choreographic objects'

further challenge this schema, by highlighting the ontological instability of dance works.

The claims that 'choreographic objects' both reveal ontological features not visible in live performance, and inform the identity of the work is made after deep probing and analysis of the objects. The ontological repercussions are arguably evident only through critical engagement with the objects. This observation led me to develop a visual model, designed to facilitate engagement with 'choreographic objects', as well as encouraging readings of dance works through the objects. Drawing on my analytic method and practical and philosophical observations, the latter part of this chapter introduces and outlines the model, which offers a visual representation of various components present in the three case studies. As previously discussed (pp. 42 – 48), there are many ways of describing, interpreting and analysing dance. Scholars such as Adshead *et al* (1988), Banes (1994), Foster (1986), Hanna (1979), Jordan and Thomas (2010) and Laban (1947),¹¹³ have contributed significantly to the field. Dance, as both an activity and an art form can be examined from a wide variety of perspectives. The analytical methods and models developed and adopted by dance theorists provided a basis from which I developed my own way of conceptualising the components of 'choreographic objects'. As with the rest of the thesis, this model focuses on dance as an art form, as opposed to that which occurs in social, ritual or educational contexts.

¹¹³ These authors have published many texts on this theme those cited here are indicative only.

Throughout the previous chapters, it has been demonstrated how each 'choreographic object' utilises different frameworks and methods. Together they generate an emergent form of analysis, which utilises digital technology in various ways to consider the process, structure and affect of the work. The breadth of approaches means that field is defined by multiplicity and that comprehending the framework used in each object requires analytical engagement with it. The Choreographic Objects Model is designed to facilitate analysis of 'choreographic objects'. It maps their central characteristics in order to meet four key aims. Firstly it encourages the user to explore the features of 'choreographic objects', secondly it facilitates philosophical questioning, thirdly it helps to develop digital dance literacy, and lastly it emphasises the relationship between the 'choreographic object' and the work, encouraging a reading of the work that acknowledges the role of the object.

Can Dance Works Change?

The lack of a universal notation system for dance means that works are not constrained through a single method. Depending on where one stands on the potentials of notation, this situation can be seen either to facilitate flexibility within the forms of dance works, or else be reflective of it. Either way, there are often large differences between instantiations of dance works, raising the question of which features of the work are essential to its identity. 'Choreographic objects', such as the three discussed in this thesis, seem to make visible essential features of the work, both constraining and informing the identity of the work. As I claimed in Chapter

Nine (pp.234 - 235), the three case studies suggest a link between scoring and ontological enquiry, as both approaches consider the features of the work that make it what it is. This results in a detailed record of the work, yet simultaneously informs how it is remembered, impacting fundamentally on its identity.

The claim that the identity of the work is changed through its digital rendering is perhaps contentious. It rests upon the idea that the way the work is perceived can have a reciprocal impact on its identity. Furthermore, arguing for this outcome depends upon the claim articulated in Chapter Five that it is possible to access the work through digital representation. As mentioned in Chapter Nine (p.226), the fragmented nature of the recordings on *A Choreographer's Score* mean that it is perhaps problematic to claim that watching these provide full access to the works discussed, even encountering the score at length does not mean that one is truly able to claim one has seen *Rosas danst Rosas*. In this case therefore the viewer's knowledge of the work is cultivated through first-hand accounts of it. In the case of *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky*, the full-length, unedited nature of the film and recordings mean that they arguably offer a complete experience of the works. However, as discussed in Chapter Twelve, these recordings are annotated and narrated, offering alternative occurrences of the work. So is it the case that *One Flat Thing, reproduced* is now fundamentally *about* structure? Are the annotations a feature of the work? Do Hay's explanations mean that the truly ambiguous nature of *No Time to Fly* is lost forever? To put it another way, can the identity of a dance work change?

A platonist conception of types does not allow for change, as under this view types exist independently of human actions and thought processes (Pakes 2013: 87). As discussed in Chapter Two (pp.32 – 33), Dodd advocates a platonist view of musical works,¹¹⁴ claiming that musical works are simple sound structures (Dodd 2000: 425). He explains that under this model,

[n]either the historico-musical context in which the piece was composed, nor any particular means of sound production (i.e. instrumentation), are essential to the work (Dodd 2000: 425).

This empiricist perspective posits the type as divorced entirely from the practice and context of instantiation, for example Dodd’s concept of “sonicism” (2007: 2), suggests musical works are identical as long as they sound the same (2007: 2).¹¹⁵ This means that regardless of the instrumentation, performers, context and so forth if a sequence of notes sounds exactly like a work, then that sequence is an authentic instance of the work. Furthermore, following the discussion of indiscernibles in the previous chapter (pp.296 – 297), conceptualising the work as purely a sound structure means that two different people can compose the same work.

So can we suggest that dance works are abstract structures of movement, independent from their historical and cultural context? Some works appear to be relatively stable and can therefore arguably be instanced by performing a specific

¹¹⁴ Pakes (2013: 83 – 88) refers to aesthetician Peter Kivy as another advocate of a platonist view of music, suggesting however that he accepts that types may not be considered under the platonist framework.

¹¹⁵ It is important to reiterate that there are multiple views regarding music ontology and Dodd’s view is not widely accepted.

sequence of movement. We might concede that as long as a sequence of movement looks like a certain work, it is an instance of that work. Indeed our practices around *some* dance works seem to suggest that features other than the movement and perhaps the music can be inessential, but this may be contentious. For example, can a ballerina perform the Romantic ballet *La Sylphide* (Taglioni 1832) in her pyjamas in her bedroom, and still be dancing *La Sylphide*? We might want to argue that she is executing (part of) the choreography, but to instance the work requires the presence of more components, such as music, costumes, other characters and so forth.¹¹⁶

Further problems with conceptualising dance works as movement structures arise when we are faced with “open” works (Rubidge 2000a; 7), such as *No Time to Fly*. The claim does not necessarily appear problematic on a metaphysical level, as the work is manifest via a movement structure. However, because these structures feature different movement every time, it cannot be considered as a single movement structure, meaning that it seems inappropriate to conceptualise the work in this way. Rather, in such cases we might want to think of the work as a set of conditions, as opposed to a movement structure.

¹¹⁶ As previously mentioned this topic is explored in depth by Pakes (2013).

Another key feature of platonist types is that they are eternal, meaning that they cannot be either created or destroyed. Thomasson explains that many philosophers have traditionally treated artworks as,

[e]ternal or timeless, changeless entities independent of all human activities; as a result, abstractist views face the challenge of accounting for the apparent role of artists in creating works of art (Thomasson 2006: 247).

The implication of this view is that composers and choreographers are engaged in acts of discovery, as opposed to creation. This might seem far-fetched; we are used to thinking about the choreographer creating a dance work (Pakes 2013: 90). However, some dance artists do conceptualise their work in this way. For example, in discussion of his collaborative practice with visual artist Ellen Kilsgaard, dance artist Chris Crickmay suggests,

[r]ather than *creating* the work, it would be more accurate to say it is *discovered* from what we notice around and within us (Crickmay 2015: 144).

Crickmay's work is improvisational therefore not strictly 'choreographed'; however these articulations highlight how dance making is an emergent process. He is not suggesting that he is attempting to uncover a specific movement structure, but that the work pre-exists its discovery by the choreographer.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Although Pakes acknowledges the problems of a platonist account for dance, she advances a convincing argument for the relevance of the notion that dance works might be discovered as opposed to created (2013: 88 – 94).

The eternal nature of platonist types means that they are incapable of change (Dodd 2007: 4). Pakes suggests that,

the platonist conception [of types] maintains that types are abstract objects which do not belong to the spatio-temporal world, and so must be causally inert, unchanging and either timeless or *eternally* existent things (Pakes 2013: 88).

The idea that dance works are unchangeable may seem feasible, as dance works do seem to possess some core features that withstand revisions, re-workings and so forth. However, this perspective means that the work is entirely divorced from the context of its instantiation. The implication is that even if the work comes to look entirely different, and/or have an entirely new meaning it has not changed. This might imply that revisions lead to new works, however we generally seem to accept large revisions to works without attributing them the status of an entirely new piece.

A platonist view is not the only option, Pakes goes on to explain that there are alternative ways of conceptualising types, including Levinson's (1980) notion of 'indicated types' and McFee's (2011) rebuttal of Dodd's characterisation (Pakes 2013: 88). Such a view is also critiqued by Thomasson (2006), who suggests that there are abstract artefacts that lack a spatio-temporal location, (such as dance works) but that they are created as opposed to discovered, and can change and cease to exist (2006: 247). This certainly seems more reflective of our practices. The way that each performance differs, and new versions of the same work can be created, means that dance works certainly *appear* to change and evolve.

The outcome of this claim for fluidity is that conceptualising a ‘type’, as a stable entity, means that it does not adequately account for the nature of dance works. Cvejić’s discussion of Pouillaude’s view may help to move towards an alternative conceptualisation. She refers to the way that Pouillaude re-formulates the type/token schema in order to relate more appropriately to dance. She suggests that under his view,

[t]he work of dance exists at once as a ‘public object’, shared and offered for judgment, and as a ‘resistant object’, capable of surviving the death of its initial protagonists, or in other words, existing beyond the experience or memory of its creation and performing processes (Pouillaude 2009, 77) (Cvejić 2015: 10).

In order to outline this mode of existence Pouillaude uses the notion of *désoeuvrement*, described by Cvejić as, “the regime of an ‘unworking’ (idle, inoperative) work” (Cvejić 2015: 10). Cvejić suggests that dance’s unworking is characterised by both physical expenditure and indifference to the trace of action, resulting in an infinite cycle of energy as opposed to specific objects or things (Cvejić 2015: 10). This articulation releases the work from the relationship to object-hood, as implied through the notion of the type, and allows for a more open conception of the work, concerned with energetic cycles and fluidity. Whilst I am sadly unable to engage more fully with Pouillaude’s thesis,¹¹⁸ this indicates a shift in thinking and paves the way for further theorising.

¹¹⁸ This is due to the fact that, as previously mentioned this book it is not yet published in English.

Properties and Perception

In this context claiming that dance works are fluid entities is the outcome of an ontological positioning that sees human knowledge and perception as intrinsically linked to the ontology of entities. However under what conditions does the work actually change? Faced with multiple different versions, we might want to argue that it is the features they share that are essential to the work's identity. On the other hand, these features may be too few or vague and/or change over time. This is where human practice and perception of the work can be seen to play an integral role in its ontology. I suggest that 'choreographic objects' alter our conception of the work, which, in turn changes its identity, suggesting that dance works are at least partially constructed via the perceptions of those who receive them.

As outlined in Chapter Three (pp.80 – 82) Thomasson argues that the ontology of works is intrinsically linked to social practices (2005: 8). Dance works are the intentional outcomes of directed human activity, as are 'choreographic objects' and therefore their ontology is dependent upon human concepts and language. Furthermore, they do not provide a neutral rendering of the work¹¹⁹ rather the object is informed by the intentions of the makers. Moreover, the interactive nature of the objects means that the user also plays an important role in shaping what the object is. I suggest that this framework can also apply to dance works, meaning that their properties might be altered by shifting social conceptions; such as those facilitated by 'choreographic objects'. This poses the central question, are the

¹¹⁹ Indeed, there is a debate to be had regarding whether such a thing is (even theoretically) possible.

perceived properties truly attributable to the work itself or merely the spectator's interpretation? Of course these questions are not specific to 'choreographic objects' and underpin many of the debates in literary theory about the role of the author, reader, work and text,¹²⁰ however these objects foreground the debate by reconfiguring the spectator's experience of the work.

In order to explore how the identity of the work is changed by its rendering through 'choreographic objects' it might help to think about which features of *One Flat Thing, reproduced* are accessible through *Synchronous Objects*. In a review of the stage version of *One Flat Thing, reproduced* for the *New York Times*, Anna Kisselgoff suggests that in *One Flat Thing, reproduced* Forsythe is,

[c]oncentrating on the different use of cues. Dancers often move to counts (internal or musical), but here they are alert to one another's breath phrases and also use visual cues (some occasionally yell "Go") (Kisselgoff 2003).

These observations demonstrate that the significance of cueing in the work is not only evident through *Synchronous Objects*, however it is central to the site. For example, in Manning's discussion of *Synchronous Objects* she suggests, "Forsythe's choreography is replete with actual and virtual cues" (2013: 104).

¹²⁰ Such as Barthes' (1977) view, as previously discussed (pp.248 – 249).

Going on to describe the significance of the relationships between the dancers, Manning explains,

[t]he cue lands non-locally, meeting the dancer in the between of movements-moving. The dancer cues or aligns not by stopping the movement but by engaging directly with the nonlocal interval of the cue as it meets movement-moving (Manning 2013: 107).

So, the relevance of cues is apparent in both versions of the work, however there are features of the work that are not discussed on *Synchronous Objects*; for example there is little mention of representational content, or external choreographic stimuli. There is also limited direct reference to any expressive properties of the work, which is described as “an ensemble dance that examines and reconfigures classical choreographic principles of counterpoint” (Forsythe and OSU 2009), and described in terms of ‘Movement Material’, ‘Cueing’ and ‘Alignments’ (Forsythe and OSU 2009). Does this mean that the work is non-representational and non-expressive? Kisselgoff’s review highlights the expressive qualities embodied in the live performance. She describes the work as a “visualized adrenaline rush” (2003), and suggests the sound is “both exhilarating and ambiguous: part earthquake, part industrial noise, part joyous release” (2003). This demonstrates how non-structural properties of the work were intrinsic to Kisselgoff’s experience. Manning’s discussion of the work through *Synchronous Objects* however makes no mention of expressive content rather it explains how the structural properties of the work generate perceptual fields. Through describing her perceptual experience Manning’s writing implies it is that it is possible to experience expressive qualities through abstract structures, however this does not seem as central to her experience as Kisselgoff’s. It is not the case that the site implies

that the work is entirely non-expressive, rather that whilst the structural properties of the work are presented in a fairly didactic manner, the expressive qualities are left more open, demonstrating how the site does not exhaust the work, and whilst appears to be concerned with the essence of the work, does not reduce every property to an essential form.

Thinking back to Forsythe's distinction between choreography and dancing, perhaps it is possible to conceptualise the focus on structure as an implicit suggestion that choreography is structural, whereas dancing is expressive. Thus the aim to render choreographic thinking *without* the body requires alternative ways to present expressive qualities. This is where the abstract animations, such as the '3D Alignment Forms', play a significant role. As discussed in Chapter Ten, these capture and represent kinaesthetic and affective features of dancing, without literally representing the body, offering a more ambiguous rendering than the annotations and narrations. The implication of this is that whilst expressive properties are arguably fundamental to the work, it is not the case that they can be taught or described to the user. This reprises the question, which properties need to be present to truly instantiate and capture the work? The way that dance does not have an established method for recording essential features affects how one answers these questions. The fact that standardised scores are rarely, if ever used in dance means that judgements about the identity of dance works and indeed 'choreographic objects' in general can perhaps only be made in relation to human language and description.

Synchronous Objects users see a different version of the work than those who watch it in a live performance, and those who have seen the non-annotated film version through a different site. The framing of the film, including the data and other forms of information offers an alternative form of engagement. Centralising human practice in ontological accounts implies that if readings and perceptions of a dance work change, so too does the work. For example, the live version of *One Flat Thing, reproduced* was accompanied by programme notes explaining how the work was inspired by explorer Robert Scott's failed expedition to the South Pole (Kisselgoff 2003) however, the film version does not share this feature. Again, this implies either that the property is non-essential, or that the work has changed. Perhaps Dodd's view is beginning to appeal: to suggest that the work is purely a sequence of movement, and that only the presence of certain movements that can be seen as essential would provide a simple solution to this puzzle, it would allow the work to take various forms, as long as the movement structure remained intact the work would be completely instanced. However, the dance equivalent to Dodd's sonicism would mean that the movement would need to *look* exactly the same for each instance to be recognisable as the work (Pakes 2013: 96). That is not the case here; viewing *One Flat Thing, reproduced* as a dance film on Vimeo for instance, and viewing the film on *Synchronous Objects* reveals the movement *is* exactly the same. However, it *looks* different.

So it seems that the challenge here is not variability in performance, but variability in the presentation platform and the audience's perception. The sites encourage users to see different features to the live performance, and therefore understand the movement differently. In *Varieties of Presence* (2012) Noë discusses this phenomenon in relation to

visual art. He asks the reader to imagine encountering a painting by an artist they are unfamiliar with, suggesting that in such scenarios the painting might appear flat or opaque, “[y]ou don’t get it” Noë suggests, “[i]t is incomprehensible” (2012: 3). Noë goes on to suggest that as we further consider the painting through relating it to previous experiences, learning about how it was made, or discussing its features with others, the piece “opens up” (2012: 3). He suggests that, “you can see it now and appreciate its structure. The piece is now present to you as meaningful” (2012: 3). He continues; “although your experience of the art work has been transformed, there is no change in the work itself” (2012: 3). Noë suggests that the change that has occurred is solely in the viewer’s ability to perceive things in the work that they were previously unable to. He does not ponder these claims for long, however, this example indicates a sense in which he appears either to believe that the work simply is its physical form, or else adopt a stance that implies the work, as either an abstract or physical is entirely distinct from the viewer’s perception of it. However, there is something more ontologically complex about the situation than Noë acknowledges.

On the one hand, if we concede that individual readings inform the nature of work it is conceived or posited as a fluid, mental entity. This means that we cannot ascribe it any objective properties at all, which seems somewhat problematic, as everything we say about the work is purely a property of the receiver’s mental engagement with it.¹²¹ The implication of this is that the way we generally talk about works is incorrect, for example if I were to say that *One Flat Thing, reproduced* is an ensemble work that uses tables as a central feature, I should really say, ‘My view of *One Flat Thing, reproduced* is that it is an

¹²¹ See Pakes (2013) for a more detailed discussion of this argument.

ensemble work that uses tables as a central feature'. The relatively non-contentious nature of my observations means that the inclusion of these conditions seems unnecessary. Although we might disagree about matters of taste and value, we usually reach a general consensus about what occurs in the work. It does not seem to follow therefore that the properties of work can be entirely attributed to the mind of the viewer. Here I wish to employ Davies' pragmatic constraint, outlined in Chapter Five (p.116), and suggest that if the dance world accepts certain features of the work, including those that they might have acquired, the identity of the work can change. This stance follows philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's theories about the nature of perception (1958). He suggests that perception lies with the viewer, but that the viewer needs to be able to argue for their interpretation. He discusses the "danger" (Wittgenstein 1958: 201) of trying to define the concept of a material object through what is really seen, rather calling for acceptance of everyday language and the acknowledgment of false accounts (1958: 201). Through describing our perceptions and interpretations we can generally reach some form of agreement about the properties of a work, therefore calling on dance world practices thus resolves us from the somewhat unsatisfactory outcome that the nature of the work is determined by every individual reading, but allows us to acknowledge the place of social practices in ontology.

Experiencing *One Flat Thing, reproduced* through *Synchronous Objects*, links the identity of the work with the site, thus structural properties are demonstrated as integral to its identity. To claim that *Synchronous Objects* changes the work suggests that features present only in the live performance are not essential to the work. Furthermore, it implies that readings of the work that do not consider the structure,

for example, can be seen as incorrect or insufficient. Although it is still possible to engage with the work independently of the site, *Synchronous Objects* provides a framework through which users can read *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, which will inform some conceptions of the work through history. Comparing readings from Kisselgoff and Manning, it seems fair to suggest that the work has taken a different form through its rendering on *Synchronous Objects*, and that the ways the work is understood, appreciated and in existence throughout history is therefore multiplied. However, the work is not fixed, rather it will continue to evolve alongside changing social practices. As Noë suggests, *Synchronous Objects*, is an,

instrument, really, [...] a gesture towards a conversation that will, that must, go on. It will go on differently than it would have (Noë 2009).

This suggestion highlights the way that *Synchronous Objects* informs the nature of *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, but is only one component in the work's large, on going and ever evolving form. The link between the audience's perception of the work and its ontology further highlights the importance of 'choreographic objects', as they have the potential to have a lasting impact on the fundamental nature of works they render. However, their ambiguous nature means that encountering them, and the work in this form, is not entirely straightforward. The following section introduces the Choreographic Objects Model, designed to assist encounters with the objects and encourage consideration of their relationship to the work.

Choreographic Objects Model

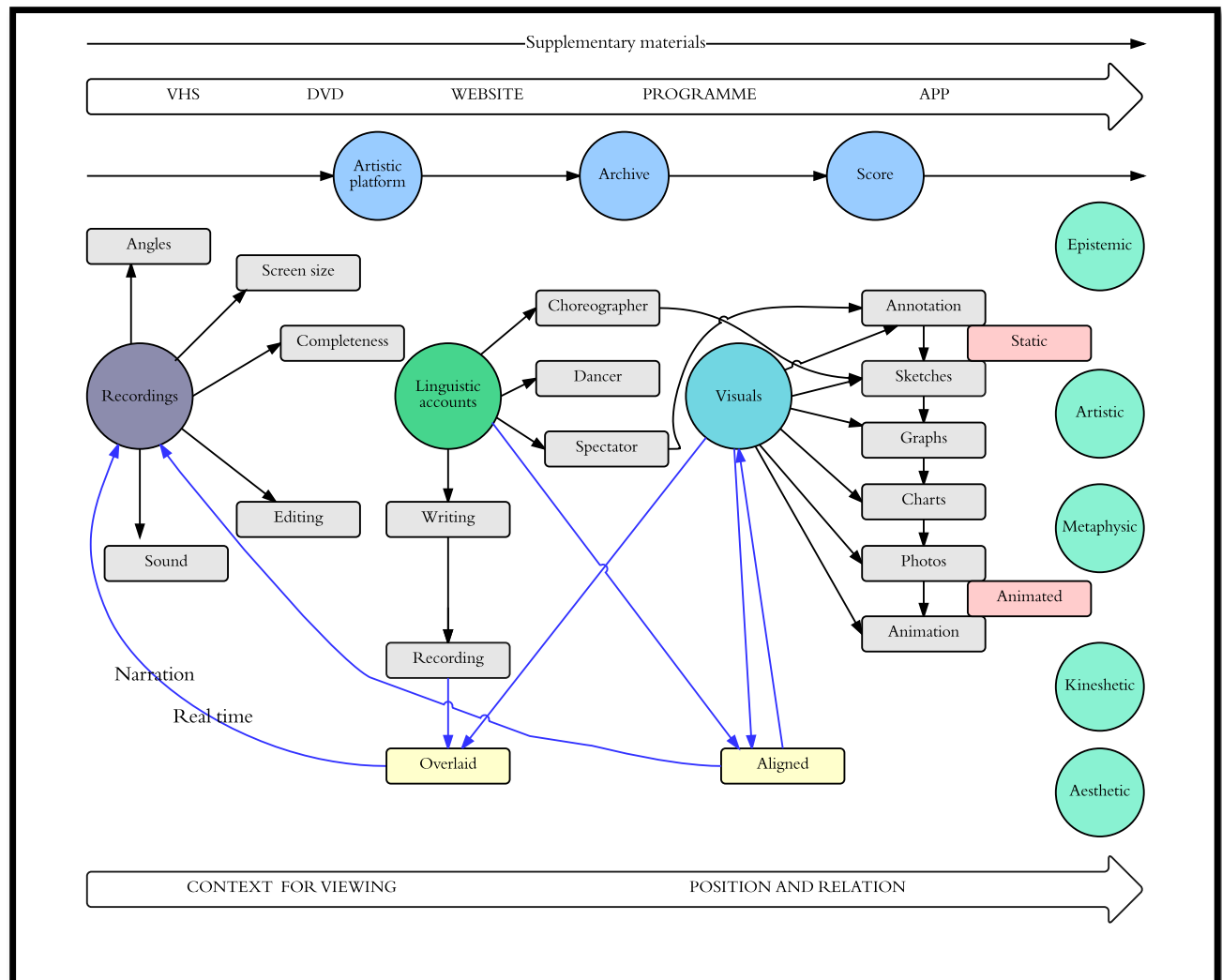


Figure 16: Choreographic Objects Model

Modelling 'Choreographic Objects'

The three 'choreographic objects' analysed in this thesis are indicative of how dance is encountered in an ever-increasing variety of ways. As discussed in Chapter Five (pp.111 - 112) we can engage with recorded dance through websites, scores and archives, which are accessed in classrooms, cinemas, libraries, museums, homes and theatres. It is apparent that the vastly varied contexts and formats for viewing dance, facilitated by digital technology, trigger different modes of perceiving dance and require alternative modes of attention to conventional theatre contexts. Although the phenomenon of dance on screen is by no means new, 'choreographic objects' demonstrate emergent ways of conceptualising and re-presenting the work, conflating the process of making with the product of performance and foregrounding of metaphysical, epistemic and kinaesthetic properties through technology and language, thus reconfiguring the relationship between the work and the spectator. The implication of this is that established methods and frameworks for reading and analysing dance – focussed primarily on the event of live performance – require re-consideration.

As discussed in Chapter Three (p.70), Hanstein suggests that using models can be helpful for the researcher, as they encourage new ways of seeing (1999: 71). Models are used in various disciplines to visualise the relationships between components, or to demonstrate stages of a process. For example, in 2004 Helmut Leder, Benno Belke, Andries Oeberst and Dorothee Augustin published a model demonstrating the process of aesthetic appreciation and aesthetic judgments. This model takes the form

of a chart, and addresses areas such as; context, prior experience, discourse and classification, theorising how they inform aesthetic emotion and aesthetic judgments. The process of perceiving art is deconstructed and re-presented in visual form, in order for the elements at play in the experience to be made clearer to the reader. This is a common method for model making. Visual diagrams allow for the reader to conceptualise information in an alternative form to purely linguistic description.

In dance contexts models serve various functions. They may be developed to help the researcher conceptualise certain ideas (Hanstein 1999), and may also serve to share information about a theory or practice with a reader. For example, Victoria Hunter's 'Model of influence' (2009) demonstrates interactions between the components in site specific performance practice. Furthermore, work conducted by Scott deLahunta and Phil Barnard with Wayne McGregor|Random Dance, resulted in various models that demonstrate McGregor's process. For example, their 'bridging' model (2011) demonstrates the way in which various forms of representation are connected by different processes during choreography.

Such examples map relations between components and concepts and are therefore similar to the construction of ontologies in computer science. As outlined in Chapter Three (pp.69 – 70), computational ontologists use diagrams to visualise the parts of an object, experience or idea. They function as tools for classification and analysis, such as Ceuster and Smith's (2011) adoption of computational methods to ontologise folk dance movement. However, the two approaches are not exactly the same. Ontologies are highly categorised, and codified, developed from exhaustive data sets.

Models on the other hand have the potential to be more open in approach. For example Noë (2009) suggests that *Synchronous Objects* provides a model of *One Flat Thing, reproduced* (2009).

Noë highlights how this method is conventionally scientific,

[s]cientists — who seek knowledge — frequently make models of phenomena in the domain that interest them. Working with the model, thinking about the model, enables them to think about what is modelled (Noë 2009).

Although not scientific, the model proposed in this chapter equally serves this function. It is a research tool, allowing me to think through the features and relations of the three scores considered in the thesis, and related ‘choreographic objects’. Furthermore, through mapping the components I aim to share this knowledge with others. This motivation generates an interesting tension, in order to make the thinking accessible to others, the images should be readable, yet the model must also capture and replicate the complexity of the objects. As Noë suggests,

[f]or one thing to model another, it must, at least notionally, exhibit something like the complexity, or the possibilities, of that which it models (2009).

As discussed by deLahunta and Barnard, models are particularly useful in interdisciplinary contexts, as when information is distanced from its original context similarities across fields become clearer (2011). As discussed in Chapter Three (p.71) the use of models for interdisciplinary research is an area further explored by Saaze and Dekker (2013) who discuss the way that their documentation model for dance

functioned as a ‘boundary object’, meaning that it allows for greater communication across boundaries and between disciplines.

There is an important distinction between diagrams and models. It is not the case that all diagrams, sketches and charts are model-like. The sketches and diagrams developed as part of the choreographic process, for example do not necessarily function in the same way. Furthermore, whilst diagrams might serve a purely prescriptive function, models enable the creator and user to think about entities in new or richer ways. They tend to focus on communicating relations. Furthermore, models are not always diagrammatic they can also be purely linguistic, such as those generated by Susan Leigh Foster (1986) and Adshead, *et al* (1988). These two models are didactic; they are designed to lead the reader or user through a process of analysis. Although they adopt distinct methods, there are some similarities, in particular in the way in which both models offer categories for consideration, presented in charts or tables, in order to encourage the reader to systematically consider certain features of movement and dance.

Both of these linguistic models are used primarily in educational contexts. Jo Butterworth suggests that,

in Dance Studies, students will probably start the course by learning to identify all the components of a dance. How many dancers are there? What is the style of the dance, and what skills to the dances need? What steps are used, and where does the dance travel in space? (Butterworth 2012: 134).

Such training often includes reference to these models.¹²² German dance researcher Wibke Hartewig argues that analysis is also central to dance practice, writing, suggesting that “[d]ance movement is observed for a myriad of reasons by a number of people with different levels of expertise” (2010: 126). Hartewig suggests that analysis operates in many different ways in dance contexts, whether or not it is identified as such, explaining how alongside forms of movement analysis that occur within practice there are systems that focus more on theoretical analysis (2010: 126). Hartewig describes *Synchronous Objects* as a form of movement analysis, suggesting it can be understood as, “the documentation of a movement analysis study of a group choreography’s structure” (2010: 132).

It is important to reiterate the distinction between movement analysis, which can be applied to movement in all contexts, and dance analysis, which focuses on what is specific about dance. The models from Adshed *et al* (1988) and Foster (1986) focus specifically on analysing and interpreting dance on stage. These theories have been influential in my own thinking about how to deconstruct and read dance through ‘choreographic objects’. This model uses the thinking offered by these scholars as a point of departure in order to expand how we think about analysis to facilitate and acknowledge the role of digital media.

¹²² According to preliminary online research, the Adshead *et al* dance analysis model is currently being taught on undergraduate degrees at Leeds University, University of Kent, and Exeter University. I have personal experience of encountering the model on syllabi at Kingston University, Coventry University, and the University of East London and I envisage that there are many more examples.

The work of Adshead *et al* demonstrates a poststructuralist positioning of the author, as absent from the act of interpretation, whereas Foster, clearly states the need to think about the role of the “choreographer’s mission” (Foster 1986: 42), implicating a concern for the intentions and processes of the choreographer. The objects under analysis split open hierarchical structures regarding the viewer, performance and so forth, they also foreground the role of the author, meaning that the identity of the choreographer and work are enmeshed. The Choreographic Objects Model therefore attempts to collapse binary ways of thinking about meaning in relation to the spectator and author, therefore the choreographer is acknowledged, without offering them visual or conceptual dominance.

The first aim of this model is to encourage the user to examine the features of ‘choreographic objects’. It was developed through analysing the components present on the three central case studies. Not every ‘choreographic object’ analysed features every component included in the model, for example, *A Choreographer’s Score* does not include animation, and there are no graphs on *Using the Sky*. However, I hope that the components included are extensive enough to provide a guide for recognising the features of the objects and for mapping relations. Including a wide range of components, which are not essentially linked to all of the case studies means that the model has the potential to generalise, as related objects are likely to comprise at least some of the elements included in the model. The model foregrounds the principles and properties of the ‘choreographic objects’, encouraging the user to question how these are represented and develop more abstract theorising

about the work and object, at some remove from the choreographic identities present on the sites.

Secondly, the model explores the potential to share and encourage philosophical thinking through diagrammatic representation. There are areas of the model that are left open, to allow the user to develop their own questions, connections and readings. The abstraction of the information aims to avoid the essentialist framework associated with scientific modelling and positivist philosophical enquiry. Negotiating this tension is one of the key motivations for the model. It is experimental; I am interested to see how the ideas are communicated and the potential of such an approach, as opposed to offering a finished final outcome. The development of the model is not an attempt to legitimise ontological enquiry through the production of a fixed output. Rather I consider it an interesting experiment and hope that it might inspire further theorising.

Many of the key questions posed by *Synchronous Objects*, *Using the Sky* and *A Choreographer's Score* are due to their use of digital technology. Even though *A Choreographer's Score* does not depend on technology to the same extent as the other two scores, the features of the DVD such as de Keersmaecker's narration and the recorded interviews are central to the claims I have made about the object. The vital role of technology means that the model I propose is more likely to generalise to other forms of digital representation,¹²³ than to related process-publications that are

¹²³ I take this term from Whatley and Varney (2009).

published in non-digital formats, such as the books by Hay and Burrows discussed previously (p.41).

The questions driving the construction of the model are not specific to dance and can be equally applied to any form of recorded representation. Therefore the third aim is to encourage reflection upon digital forms and a deeper understanding of the nature of digital representation, thus developing the digital literacy of the user. Indeed furthering Adshead's argument for the importance of analytic education (1988: 4 – 20), it is perhaps possible to suggest that aesthetic education must now comprise training in analysing digital forms, such as 'choreographic objects' in the case of dance.

Understanding the language and structure of the online scores requires digital literacy. 'Born Digital: Dance in the Digital Age' (2009) written by Whatley in collaboration with Ross Varney, discusses the increased technological abilities of dance practitioners. The authors suggest that the interaction between dance and digital technology may have informed the development of a generation of artists who are 'born digital'. Whilst the focus of their paper is on the technical abilities of dance students and practitioners, it raises the question of whether the born digital generation see dance differently, due to their potential comfort with accessing information via a screen.

The term 'digital literacy' encompasses a wide range of literacies. It is described on the Jisc (formerly the Joint Information Systems Committee) website as "those

capabilities which fit an individual for living, learning and working in a digital society” (n.d.). The site outlines seven forms of digital literacies, referring to a wide range of skills, including: “Learning Skills: Study and Learn Effectively in technology-rich environments. Formal and informal” (jisc n.d.), and: “Digital Scholarship: Participant in emerging academic, professional and research practices that depend on digital systems” (Jisc n.d.). Each of the seven literacies could be applied in some way to the three scores analysed. It is possible to suggest that through clarifying the nature, function and role of ‘choreographic objects’ this model might play a part in the development of digital literacies. Interestingly it seems that encouraging and cultivating ‘*dance* literacy’ is often a driving force in the construction of digital ‘choreographic objects’, yet in order to develop skills in the reading of dances certain digital competencies need to be gained, thus further demonstrating the intrinsic relationship between dance and technology in such contexts.

This model provides a way for users to consider the properties and relations of the ‘choreographic object’. It offers a visual representation of philosophical associations, in the hope of meeting the final aim of enabling users to access the work through the object. It is intended for scholars, students and artists, encouraging them to engage theoretically with ‘choreographic objects’ and other forms of digital representation, and acknowledge their role in our perception of dance, as opposed to trying to see through the media to the ‘truth’ of performance.

Whilst dance has been recorded in many ways since the 19th Century, it was not until the 1990s that recording became commonplace in contemporary dance practice.

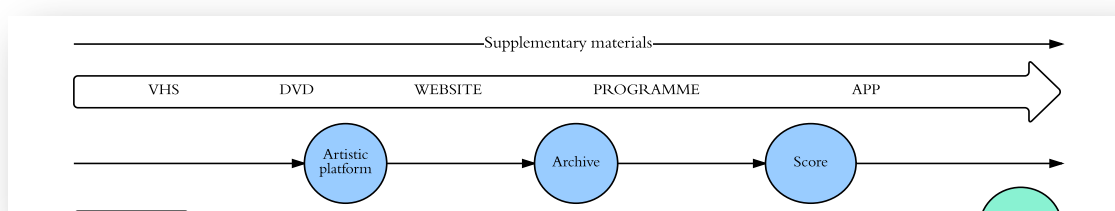
Adshead and Foster's models were developed prior to this shift and therefore do not mention the role of the screen or recording technology. Yet, both models are used for the analysis of dance via a screen, despite making no reference to the wide range of additional components that this experience affords. 'Choreographic objects' demonstrate how the work, and the literacies required to access the work are essentially linked to the confluence of the movement and screen, therefore I suggest that as our practices for reading dance evolve, so too must our analytic frameworks.

The Choreographic Objects Model foregrounds ontological enquiry, encouraging users to think in-depth about what it is they are looking at. I chose to leave the user with choices regarding how to engage with the object and have therefore adopted a more polysemic visual approach, as opposed to a didactic teaching methodology, such as the approach utilised by Foster and Adshead *et al.* This move away from a pre-occupation with the physical presence of the body in performance demonstrates processes of abstraction (Portanova 2013: 1- 15). The body is re-formed through digital media, which is in turn abstracted through philosophical enquiry, concepts of which are re-presented in the concrete images of the model. The hierarchies of dance, work, performance and experience are further muddled. Portanova suggests that her work, "refuses to give ontological precedence to phenomenal materiality; not everything is reducible to the body" (2013: 6). This framework is echoes in this model, which seeks to foreground the concepts of 'choreographic objects', through which the abstract work is experienced and deconstructed.

Features of the Model

This model maps the various features of the 'choreographic object'. Some of the terminology may be familiar, as it arose from my analysis of the case studies outlined in previous chapters. The model is deliberately open in places, in order to encourage the user to participate actively in drawing connections between the constitutive parts. The arrow at the top of the page, which travels from left to right encourages users to identify the format of the object. The two broad arrows are intended to represent continuum, meaning that the categories offered operate in conjunction with one another and can be seen as components of the same thing.

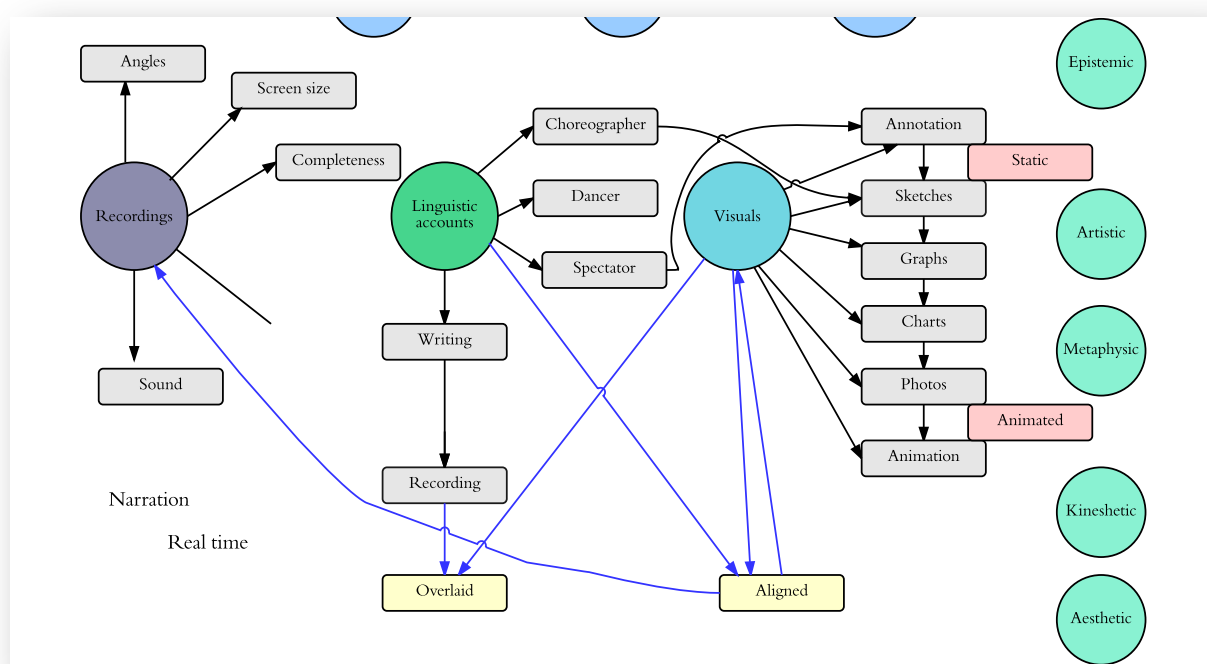
Figure 17: The top section of the Choreographic Objects Model



The top section of the model (see Figure 17) involves identifying what the object *is*, through acknowledging its format. The broad arrow running across the top of the page demonstrates how 'choreographic objects' can be accessed in multiple different ways. Broadly speaking they exist either, as DVD, videos, websites, programmes, and apps. These digital manifestations may be all or only part of the object. Supplementary materials are acknowledged in the arrow above. There are potential overlaps, for example, some works are both online and on DVD. This means that there may be examples where the user is not able to allocate an object to either

category. In which case they can decide how to conceptualise the object, these distinctions are intended to draw attention to format, rather than provide strict categories. The blue circles below the top arrow offer preliminary categories for establishing what the objects are or how they are intended to function. The three classes, 'Artistic Platform', 'Archive' and 'Score' are not exhaustive or exclusive. Objects might feasibly belong to all three of the categories, as indicated by the arrow running through the circles.

Figure 18: The central section of the Choreographic Objects Model



The central section (see Figure 18) is the most complex. The purple circle invites the user to consider the place and nature of recordings within the 'choreographic object'. The grey rectangles provide stimuli to think about the features of the recordings. Users are encouraged to address the 'Angles', 'Screen size', 'Completeness', 'Editing' and 'Sound'. Camera angles significantly inform the viewer's perception of the

movement. As well as considering the place of the camera in relation to the body, features such as zoom, the number of cameras, and whether the camera is static or mobile are also significant. Here I chose not to include reference to all of these options, as it overcomplicated the visuals. I hope that by drawing attention to camera angles, the user is able to notice such features. 'Screen size' is fairly self-explanatory, whilst the size of the screen one encounters the object on is significant, thinking more specifically about the size of the screen that presents the recording is also important. For example, accessing recordings through full screen projections means that it is the only image on screen, whereas small screen recordings are embedded within other forms of representation, which impacts on the way the movement is seen. 'Completeness' refers to the question of whether the recording captures an entire performance. The word is deliberately slightly ambiguous as it might also encourage the user to consider the completeness of movement phrases¹²⁴ for example. 'Sound' is a straightforward starting point, simply encouraging the user to consider the aural effect of the recording, which of course may include conventional musical accompaniment or another sound component.

The green symbol represents linguistic accounts; here the grey rectangles invite the user to consider whom these accounts are from and which form they take. The 'Visuals' section offers various options for the user to establish which forms of visual information are present on the site. The six categories; 'Annotation', 'Sketches', 'Graphs', 'Charts', 'Photos' and 'Animation' encompass the forms of visuals offered on

¹²⁴ See deLahunta and Barnard (2005) for a discussion about the nature of movement phrases.

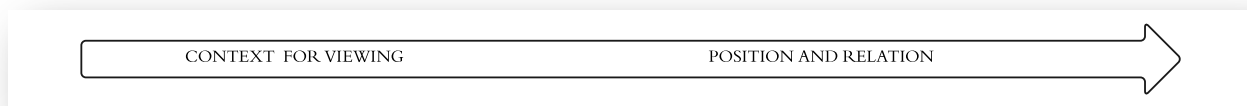
the three scores considered here, although other categories may need to be added or considered. Again here some overlap is likely, for example, there may be no obvious distinction between a sketch and a chart, as exemplified by some of De Keersmaeker's notes (p.197). Equally animation and annotation may be conflated, as is the case with *Synchronous Objects*.

The black arrows linking each circle to the various options demonstrate the many forms each component might adopt. The blue arrows, on the other hand are demonstrative of the types of relations that might be discovered through using the model. They are by no means exhaustive but serve to demonstrate to the user how connections can be drawn and conceptualised. For example, the potential for narration is signified by the arrow joining recorded linguistic accounts to the 'Recordings' circle via the 'Overlaid' box, demonstrating how the two components might relate.

'Choreographic objects' are often the outcome of extensive analysis, therefore the work is already deconstructed, meaning that reader's analytic role is perhaps unclear, are we to analyse the work further, or read the analysis presented as the single truth of the work? In order to help users navigate such questions, the model encourages users to consider the forms of analysis provided, so that they can further understand how the work has been deconstructed and re-presented, offering the opportunity to cultivate their own, perhaps contrasting analyses. The pink boxes on the right offer further clarification about the nature of the visuals, drawing the user's attention to the question of whether they are 'Static' or 'Animated'. Meanwhile, the two yellow

boxes below encourage consideration of the relations between the recordings, linguistic accounts and visual components, asking if they are 'Overlaid' or 'Aligned'.

Figure 19: The lower section of the Choreographic Objects Model



Watching dance via digital media happens in a variety of different contexts. This impacts on the experience of the viewer, and in turn, their perception of the dance. The increased accessibility of dance via digital platforms means that the context for viewing is an important thing to consider. There is a clear difference between watching dance via a phone while on a bus, and attending a cinema screening. The size of the screen, the physical location of the spectator's body, and the other people present will all impact on their experiences. The final broad arrow (see Figure 19) encourages the user to articulate their location and position, before focussing on the other people who are part of the experience. It is important to consider whether the experience is shared or solitary, and how this informs the reading or experience of the work. Lastly, the green circles on the far right of the page represent the range of properties manifest through the digital rendering of the work. 'Artistic' and 'Aesthetic' properties are presented alongside 'Epistemic', indicating features that explicitly provide knowledge *about* the work, 'Metaphysical', to refer to non-physical properties such as repetition and difference, and 'Kinaesthetic' features used to refer to properties that cultivate affect and/or kinaesthetic empathy. Here the intention is

that the user can start to draw connections between the components of the object and the manifest properties, thus probing the confluence of the work and technology.

Using the Model

The following section demonstrates how the model can be used to encounter a 'choreographic object'. I provide a narrative account of encountering *Two* (2014) one of the objects made for Motion Bank by Palazzi and Zuniga Shaw, alongside Bebe Miller and Thomas Hauert, through the model.

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This brief example demonstrates how the model might be used in practice. It highlights its non-didactic nature and its use as a guide to encourage theorising of the features and relations of the object. There are methodological questions posed; moving between the model and the object at times I wonder where to look next.

Should I explore the site at random and return to the model to help me make connections, or use the model as a guide, leading me to search for kinaesthetic properties, charts and so forth? It seems that moving between the two provides the most helpful experience. However, as with the 'choreographic objects', the way that this is used can be left open. Each user can decide how to utilise the model in order to help them move and think through the object.

Summary

This chapter considered the impact of 'choreographic objects' on the identity and ontology of dance works. I suggest that as the work is re-presented in an alternative form to live performance, readings of it change, I suggest that this has a direct impact on the identity of the work. This claim means that the work cannot be conceptualised as an unchanging platonist type, rather that it is a more flexible, unstable entity. The central role of social practices on the ontology of works means that the way we read the work through the 'choreographic object' is an important area to consider, hence the motivation to develop the 'choreographic objects' model, in order to facilitate analytic and philosophical probing and encourage users to think through the how the object informs readings of the work.

What then does the model bring to the analytic process? Presenting philosophical and analytic enquiry in visual form allows for a more open approach than a list of

questions, for example. deLahunta and Barnard suggest that using visualisation can help bridge the gap between dance practice and scholarship. They state that,

[o]ne of the primary points at which separations occur between choreographers/dancers and scholars/critics is at the point where analysis and language are brought into play (deLahunta and Barnard 2005: 5).

Although this model clearly uses language, this is limited. It is intended to encourage analysis, rather than demonstrate analysis that has already occurred. The model is not a strict categorisation of components, or a codified diagram, the mapping of relations, for example is deliberately polysemic, a feature that would be much harder to communicate solely through writing. The process of close reading and categorisation informed my methodology, which involved listing features and considering how the reading of the object was constructed. In this sense it follows a structuralist paradigm, yet, following poststructuralist thought it allows the user to generate individual readings.

Although models from Adshead *et al* (1988), Banes (1994) and Foster (1986) served as points of departure, unlike dance and movement analysis, this model is not focussed solely on the work, but on the 'choreographic object', and its relation to it. This is due to the way that the dance and technology arguably play equal roles in our conception of the work. Focussing on the object is intended to encourage users to think about its place and relevance in their experience, echoing a shift in thinking. Our engagement with dance works through archives, scores and so forth encourage us to *know* the work as well, or even instead, of *seeing* it. Analytic methods therefore are also

shifting away from being concerned with ways of seeing towards an interest in ways of knowing. Therefore 'choreographic objects' reflect a cognitivist approach to analysis, implying that dance analysis methods might need rethinking for the experience of watching dance through digital media, which often conflates provenance related, aesthetic and artistic properties of the work. The next chapter provides a conclusion to this study. I reflect upon the key findings, drawing together and reiterating the central themes and avenues of enquiry.

Chapter Fourteen: Conclusion

This thesis has explored some of the philosophical questions posed by three recently developed dance scores. I have focussed on three key questions; what are 'choreographic objects'? How do they reconfigure spectatorial engagement with specific dance works? And, how does this reconfiguration encourage a rethinking of their ontological statuses? I have answered these questions through detailed probing and theorising of the case studies, suggesting that they are new forms of dance score which utilise and extend dance analysis methods, drawing together articulations about choreographic process and affective imagery to cultivate a form of posthuman poetics. I suggest that through revealing properties of the work that are not evident in performance alone, such as causal information, repeatability and performance variability, the viewer is led into a new form of engagement with the work, conceptualised as consisting of more than merely temporary movement in space. The presentation of various forms of information reconfigures the identity of the work, and reveals its fluid and unfixed ontology.

'Choreographic objects' have arisen from a group of artists and researchers, who are interested in finding ways to analyse and share choreographic principles and knowledge, with the aid of digital technology. Together they give rise to a 'community of practice' (Wenger 1998, deLahunta 2013b). Related to these projects are a range of artist-led, process-focussed publications. However, I draw a distinction between these two forms, and use the notion of 'choreographic objects', following Leach, deLahunta and Whatley (2008) to refer specifically to explorations that are developed

collaboratively and use digital technology. Zuniga Shaw (2014: 207) and Cvejić (2012: 9) each point out the idiosyncratic nature of ‘choreographic objects’, which is demonstrated by *Synchronous Objects, Using the Sky* and *A Choreographer’s Score*. Each of these objects are developed and designed to reflect the choreographer’s unique ‘signature practice’ (Melrose 2006). Not only do the scores appear and function differently from one another, they also demonstrate distinct analytic frameworks. For example, *Synchronous Objects* can be seen to adopt a structuralist perspective, focussing on the closed structure of *One Flat Thing, reproduced*. *A Choreographer’s Score*, on the other hand demonstrates an intertextual approach, drawing connections across De Keersmaecker’s works, and outlining her influences. *Using the Sky* centralises the body through digital representation, implicating a posthuman paradigm, in which the body and technology are entwined.

Despite the labelling as ‘scores’ and the adoption of existing frameworks for analysing dance, I argue that ‘choreographic objects’ are novel entities, advancing and problematising existing ways of understanding dance scores and developing new analytic methods. The way that they challenge existing categories such as ‘archive’, ‘document’ and ‘score’ makes them particularly interesting. The ambiguous nature of the objects and the way that they elude simple categorisation first sparked my interest and caused me to question what they are, which I explored through analysing their form and function. As I studied the objects I was led to think about the types of knowledge and tools required to navigate them in order to understand the contribution they make to existing ways of conceptualising dance making, works and performance. This thinking drove the development of the Choreographic Objects

Model (p.322), which aims to share my system of analysis with others. My analysis of the objects gave rise to a systematic, yet open frame through which others can explore, encounter and make sense of the objects. The emergent nature of 'choreographic objects' means that this new form of entity is currently under-theorised, therefore this research is timely and important.

Each score utilises the potentials of digital technology in different ways. Whilst *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky* exist as websites which are freely accessible online, *A Choreographer's Score* is more analogue, taking the form of a book and DVD. *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky* utilise some similar methods, such as annotation and animation, alongside recordings, images, diagrams and so forth. However, the aim of *Synchronous Objects* to enhance dialogues across disciplines (Forsythe and OSU 2009) means that it uses a wider range of methodological approaches than the other scores, including data visualisation, graphs, interactive tools and so forth. *A Choreographer's Score* uses only the DVD to render information digitally. However, the way that this component allows for the integration of speech and movement and foregrounds De Keersmaeker through spoken and danced explanation, means that it is an essential feature of the object.

Despite the differences, the collaborative methodologies and central role of technology means that they fall under the rubric of 'choreographic objects'. In the final chapter I suggest that the way that these objects depend upon technology means that they may have more in common with other forms of digital representation than other forms of process-focussed publications (pp.329 – 330). The

semantic details may appear arbitrary; however locating these objects in relation to other types of entities has been an important part of this enquiry, which has been occupied with attempting to understand what these objects are, as well as what it is that they do — on both practical and philosophical levels.

The emergent nature of ‘choreographic objects’ means that disambiguation has not been a straightforward venture. However, despite their numerous differences, these three objects share more than the label of ‘choreographic object’, their similarities are also indicated through their collective labelling as scores. The first stage of this thesis establishes what it is that is implied by, and expected from a dance score. Chapter One outlines a brief history of dance scoring and demonstrates its relationship with standardised notational systems. Here I sketch a traditional view proposed by Goodman (1976) and McFee (1992, 2011), amongst others, under which scores are notational and function theoretically to constrain the identity of dance works. I demonstrate how there have been many attempts to formulate sharable movement notations systems, in order to save dance from the “lament” (Arbeau in Lepecki 2004: 125) of its ephemerality.

Chapter Two provides a literature review, outlining key arguments about the ontology, documentation and analysis of dance works. I introduce philosophical discourses about art and dance ontology, in order to lay the theoretical foundations for the development of my argument that ‘choreographic objects’ reveal ontological features of works and reconfigure our relationship with them, encouraging a rethinking of how we might conceptualise their ontology.

Chapter Three discusses the methodology for the research. I contextualise the study, outlining how it draws on discourses from multiple fields. I explain my decision to focus on three case studies and discuss how the research navigates tensions between positivist and postpositivist frameworks. I suggest that such paradigms echo the philosophical tensions around the role of social practices in ontological enquiry. For example, positivists see the world, and entities within the world, such as dance works, as comprising stable features, about which we can be correct or incorrect. A postpositivist paradigm, on the other hand, acknowledges the place of the researcher and the potential for multiple versions of reality, relating to an ontological positioning that emphasises the role of human perception, language and practice; allowing for multiplicity and fluidity in ways of knowing, seeing and being within the world.

This research adopts a postpositivist perspective, foregrounding the significance of social practice for dance ontology, however, the adoption of a philosophical methodology, which includes constructing arguments through theory testing can be seen to lean towards the centre of the positivist/postpositivist spectrum. As articulated in Chapter Three (pp.62 - 65), Analytic Philosophy is at times accused of adopting positivist frameworks. For example, Cvejić refers to the field's "positivist logic" (2015: 10). This view is perhaps due to the way that arguments tend to be focussed towards the resolution of a philosophical problem with a singular outcome, as opposed to allowing for multiple possible results. Following this framework, there are times within this study where I resist the temptation to resolve issues on a case-by-case basis, or in relation to individual opinion. For example, in Chapter Twelve

(pp.293 - 294), I suggest that resolving the empiricism issue by allowing for access to 'choreographic knowledge' to be deemed essential in the case of some works and inessential in others is unsatisfactory. Such claims can be seen to lean towards a positivist framework, despite being rooted in postpositivist enquiry.

I propose that this research has demonstrated the relevance of Analytic Philosophical Aesthetics for thinking through some of the questions posed by current dance practices. The breadth and depth of the literature means that many of the philosophical problems encountered have been addressed and argued from multiple angles, greatly expanding my thinking. Furthermore, the adoption of a logical and rigorous approach to argument building has allowed me to disambiguate 'choreographic objects', shedding light on their role, function, motivations and ontological impact. Building on this philosophical theorising, I adopted the use of modelling in order to share my thinking through a visual tool. This approach helped me to think through the objects and make sense of their role and function. Furthermore it allows me to make my method for probing 'choreographic objects' more accessible to others than when articulated in language alone.

Scoring an Ontology

The discussion of scoring is further developed in Chapter Four, where I propose a move away from the traditional view. Alongside Goodman and McFee, I analyse a range of theoretical perspectives from Van Imschoot (2010), D'Amato (2014), Burrows (in Burrows and Van Imschoot 2005) and Birringer (2013). I also pay

attention to examples of dance scores from Forsythe (1997), Butcher (1999) and Stark Smith (2008). Considering various examples, I outline an expanded conception of dance scores, which aims to encompass the wide variety of artefacts and practices. I suggest that dance scores may be physical or mental entities, which provide parameters from or through which the activation of a work or practice is generated. I outline some of the ways that scores and dance works are related, suggesting that whilst some scores might aim to fully indicate dance works, others, such as improvisation scores, for example are more open, leading the interpreter into movement which does not necessarily generate the performance of a specific work. I suggest that such scores might be conceptualised as action instigating, as opposed to work indicating (p.104). I draw a distinction between the role of scores for dance artists and scores as tools for study, but suggest that however they are used, scores are usually created with a direct relationship to action (pp.109 – 110). It is this characteristic that the three central case studies problematise, as they are designed first and foremost as research tools, disrupting even a very expanded conception of dance scores.

Before addressing the three case studies, Chapter Five considers the nature of recordings and their relationship to the work. I argue that viewers can access dance via recordings, disputing proposals from McFee (1992, 2011) and Carr (1987) that dance can only be legitimately encountered in live performance. This is an important stage in the construction of the overall argument that ‘choreographic objects’ impact on the ontology of dance works, as each object uses recordings as central to their analysis and re-presentation of the work. I discuss the way that we encounter dance

works through films and recordings and establish a view that we are able to legitimately access the work in this form. I argue that the type/token schema used by many aestheticians fails to adequately account for dance in digital form, arguing instead for a hierarchical conceptualisation of dance, which acknowledges the significance of the live event, without dismissing the relevance of recordings (pp.122 - 125). The centrality of recorded versions of the work to each of the scores means that demonstrating their close relationship to the work lays the foundation for me to argue in Chapters Twelve and Thirteen that 'choreographic objects' have an impact on the lasting identity of the work, as recordings are annotated, fragmented, overlaid and presented alongside contextual and causal properties. The implication of this is that the work accrues different meanings, aesthetics and significance than when presented in live performance. This further questions the idea that a work can be conceptualised as a fixed, unchanging 'type', as the identity of the work is both constrained and altered by its rendering.

The case studies in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight provide detailed descriptions of each of the objects alongside some initial analysis. Here the emphasis is on cultivating an image of the scores for the reader and exploring the paradigms embodied within them. These chapters pave the way for Chapter Nine, which discusses how 'choreographic objects' do not align with the expanded conception of the score, due to the way that they do not directly instigate a work or practice. Although the scores have generative functions, these appear to be secondary, as the scores are primarily concerned with the dissemination of 'choreographic knowledge', and training how viewers see and know the work as opposed to documenting or instigating action.

Despite posing challenges to the notion of the score, I argue that the labelling of the case studies is not incorrect and instead allows us to rethink the nature of dance scores. Their classification draws attention to their score-like qualities. For example, each object demonstrates a concern with capturing the features of the work. The way in which this is done in an expansive as opposed to reductionist way implies a concern with the essence of the work, as opposed to a quest to stabilise essential features. This is reflected in Zuniga Shaw's suggestion that the research is concerned with "fleshing out" the dance, as opposed to pinning it down (2014: 99) and Čičigoj's (2013: 108) suggestion regarding the challenge posed to essentialist frameworks mentioned in Chapter Twelve (P.212).

I suggest that the motivation to capture the essence of the work demonstrates a link between scoring and ontology, which is equally occupied with the quest to understand the nature of dance works. Conceptualising this form of scoring as a mode of ontological enquiry and an excavation of the work allows for the emancipation from the term as essentially linked to action. This link is further compelled by the use of mapping and visualisation techniques on the scores, echoing methods used in computational ontologies, thus linking abstract and physical ontologies through the concept of the score.

These scores can be understood to occupy a place in the trajectory of dance analysis. Close reading of the concepts and actions of dance works are central to their construction. The objects deploy a wide range of analytic frameworks, which recall

established ways of reading dances, associated with Labanotation, (post)structuralism, intertextuality, criticism and poetics, as well as drawing on methods from disciplines outside of dance, such as Design, Computer Science and Geography, at times implicating a posthumanist paradigm through the digital rendering and relations of the body.

Another commonality between the scores concerns the (re)situation of the choreographer. Forsythe, Hay and De Keersmaeker each play a central role in the construction and presentation of the scores. Whilst Forsythe is less visually present than Hay and De Keesmaeker, his written and narrated accounts provide a perceptual presence at the heart of the score. These direct accounts from the choreographers challenge poststructuralist notions of authorship and represent a shifting cultural and artistic landscape. As choreographic process is increasingly shared and analysed, the identity of the maker is foregrounded, disrupting established ways of reading dance, which traditionally prioritise the interpretations of the viewer, and constraining the work in accordance with the intentions of the maker. This, in turn impacts on the identity of the work, highlighting the potential for 'correct' and 'incorrect' readings and diminishing the role of ambiguity. This shift points to a post-poststructuralist paradigm, in which the author is perceptually present in the rendering of the work; a feature facilitated by the capabilities of digital technology.

The central role of the choreographer is considered in Chapter Ten, in which I explore suggestions from Cvejić (2012: 8) and deLahunta (2013a: 2) that these objects offer a form of poetics. I consider how the scores align with the double function of a poetics,

outlined by Louppe to both tell us what a work does to us, and teach us how it was made (2010: 4). I consider the role of affect in the scores, suggesting that animations and narration foreground the affective function of the movement. The abstraction of the body and the reconfiguration of the relationship between the spectator and dancers' bodies leads me to suggest that such objects are indicative of a posthumanist paradigm, in which the body is extended, abstracted and represented through the screen. I deploy the concept of posthumanism with care, calling for pragmatism and arguing that despite the ever-increasing relationship between the body and the screen, we generally maintain a distinction between the technological and actual. Whilst digital images might have affective potential, I do not suggest that this draws us into a space whereby we cannot delineate between abstract, digital bodies and our own forms. Although one might draw on examples of immersive practice or submersion in virtual realities to argue that such a thing is possible, these are marginal cases, and I propose that such examples should not be used as evidence for an on-going or ever-present muddling of the digital and the flesh.

Labour, Value and Knowledge

All three scores foreground the process, labour and structure involved in the making and performance of the works. This decentralises the performance event, reconfiguring established ontological hierarchies. In Chapter Five I argue for a hierarchical ontological structure that reflects our experiences of dance. This notion is reprised in Chapter Eleven, where I argue that the established hierarchy of the work's features is reorganised through 'choreographic objects'. Whilst performances have

traditionally been the “commodity form” (Leach 2013: 11) for dance, documentation, rehearsals, authorial intentions and the debris of the making process are conventionally viewed as secondary to the performed manifestation of the work. Value has typically been ascertained through the perception and evaluation of aesthetic and artistic features of the work. However, these objects reveal other properties, for example, they highlight the role of features such as repetition, as is the case with the multiple recordings of *Using the Sky*. Furthermore, they foreground affect through abstract animated renderings of the work, and articulate knowledge, via written and spoken accounts from the choreographers. Metaphysical, kinaesthetic and epistemic properties are therefore presented alongside artistic and aesthetic ones. The reorganisation of the work’s components resituates value, as viewers are encouraged to appreciate the labour and knowledge involved in the making of the work. This not only recalls Marxist (1887) notions, but also highlights the link between the objects and the knowledge-centric socio-political climate in which they were constructed.

As Zuniga Shaw (2014: 207) articulates, the notion of ‘choreographic knowledge’ played an important role in the construction of the objects. Chapter Twelve considers how the transmission of this form of knowledge impacts on the perception and appreciation of the dance work. Exploring empiricist perspectives regarding the appreciation of art, I demonstrate how ‘choreographic objects’ challenge this perspective and ask what role ‘choreographic knowledge’ has on the viewer’s appreciation of the work. Calling for moderate empiricism, I suggest that knowledge from inside the work can inform our appreciation of it, but aim to acknowledge that

such information is not necessarily helpful or required in all contexts, and furthermore, suggest that it is deeply problematic to suggest that the explicit articulation of 'choreographic knowledge' is *essential* to the appreciation of the work.

The ways in which the 'choreographic objects' inform the appreciation of the work is central to this enquiry. In particular I explore the relationship between perception and ontology, asking whether the presentation of the works through the 'choreographic objects' can be seen to change the identity and ontology of the work. I argue that dance works have the potential to change, thus challenging the applicability of a platonist model for explaining the ontology of the work (Pakes 2013).

Chapter Five introduces the unsuitability of the type/token schema for dance, outlining how it does not account for recordings and is therefore not reflective of our evolving practices for viewing dance. Chapter Thirteen further considers the way that 'choreographic objects' highlight problems with the use type/token schema for dance. I suggest that the identity of the work might change through its digital rendering, meaning that they cannot be explained as stable, unchanging 'types'. Furthermore, I propose that such case studies reveal ontological features of the work. For example, that the work of making and performing dance is intrinsically linked to the artwork.

The question of whether the scores reveal or reconfigure features of the work has repeatedly occurred. I suggest that both are possible. The objects simultaneously

raise philosophical questions, *reveal* ontological features of dance works and *reconfigure* the identity of the works in question, and our spectatorial engagement with it. Whilst I suggest that they reorganise the ontological structuring of the work, by revealing features other than performance as of equal importance. However, they do not reconfigure the metaphysical nature of dance works *per se*, which I suggest still exist as abstract entities made present in various ways. Rather, they highlight how the work is an open form, which has the potential to change and evolve as the *identity* of the work and the properties it possesses are linked to social practices and therefore fluid and unfixed. Suggesting that the work may change reiterates that some works are not amenable to codified notation, as they appear to elude fixation. Furthermore, it implies that scores are unable to constrain the work, as in doing so they fundamentally change it. This is a feature demonstrated by ‘choreographic objects’, which appear to be the result of a desire to shape conceptions of the work, and in doing so impact fundamentally on its very nature.

The motivation to further develop the philosophical probing of the work, in particular in relation to technology is further demonstrated through the Choreographic Object Model presented in Chapter Thirteen. Here I adopt the methodology of visual modelling. This approach is conventionally used in scientific contexts and increasingly adopted in dance research to translate concepts across disciplines. This model is not an attempt to validate theoretical philosophical enquiry through the construction of a fixed output, I hope that the previous chapters demonstrate the relevance of philosophical theorising in its own right. Rather the model provides a frame through

which users can probe and explore the 'choreographic objects', in order to facilitate further philosophical thinking.

The way that the model foregrounds the 'choreographic object', as opposed to focussing solely on the dance work aims to encourage users to consider the way that the two co-exist. This work responds to established dance analysis models, such as those developed by Foster (1986) and Adshead *et al* (1988), which use linguistic categories relating to the work's components. However, I suggest that the role of technology in the perception of the work must be considered, thus drawing attention to the way that properties are framed by and arise from the features of the objects.

One of the most interesting things about the case studies considered in this thesis is that they are new and understudied objects. This means that the importance of understanding their ontology for our perception, use and analysis is evident. Simply put, we need to know what they are before we can use them to their full potential. Furthermore, they are relatively ambiguous objects, meaning that, as discussed in the previous chapter, the ways that they are used will shape what they become. I hope that the model can provide a contribution to the way that the objects are engaged with. By tracing the various discourses and modes of reading that impact on knowing what a 'choreographic object' *is*, I have constructed a model that aids this understanding, and provides evidence for the argument that 'choreographic objects' offer new forms of dance analysis, which impact fundamentally on the way we read dance works, reconfiguring their identity and revealing the fluidity of their ontology.

Future Areas of Enquiry

There are many discussions in this thesis that deserve and inspire more detailed discussion. Cvejić's article (2015) in the *Performance Philosophy* journal was published just prior to the completion of this thesis and appears to invite dialogue between Analytic and Continental frameworks regarding the ontology of dance works. Interestingly Cvejić refers briefly to projects such as Motion Bank, suggesting that they imply that ontologies should be determined on a case-by-case basis (2015: 10). It seems this claim is perhaps based on the implicit acknowledgment of the way such objects foreground the author and expose the term 'work' as a conflation of verb and noun, referring to both the labour and product of dance making, implicating them as one and the same. Cvejić suggests that such an enquiry,

entails paying attention to the idiosyncratic relationship between the shareable (exterior or public) and the reticent, self-absorbed or shattered aspects of a dance work, case by case (Cvejić 2015: 10).

The notion that ontological issues must be resolved individually, also touched upon by Pakes (2015), requires further consideration. Of particular interest is how one might develop a model that encourages this mode of enquiry. I am interested in the potential for developing a visual aid for metaphysical enquiry and further exploring the tension and complexities involved in such a project. The forthcoming publication of Pakes's monograph as well as her translation of Pouillaude's text is likely to greatly inform the development of my thinking around philosophical ontology.

At the time that this research draws to a close ‘choreographic objects’ continue to be developed. Cvejić and De Keersmaecker have now published three scores. The Motion Bank team are furthering their research through a series of ‘Choreographic Coding Labs’, (deLahunta and Jenett 2015), which draw together choreographers, dancers and creative coders to further probe the reciprocal relationship between dance and digital data. Furthermore, there are multiple researchers and artists working on related projects.¹²⁵ As ‘choreographic objects’ develop so too will this research. The suggestions and observations made here may evolve alongside social and artistic practices. The unset nature of the objects and the emergent nature of the field mean that as digital scoring continues to evolve, so too must our probing, examination and theorising.

¹²⁵ See the ‘Knowledge Base’ page of the Motion Bank website for an example of some of these projects; <http://motionbank.org/en/content/knowledge-base>

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Appendix: Evidence of Ethical Approval

My Projects – Online Management Information System (OMIS)

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Project Information

Project Ref: **P15437**

Full name: Hetty Blades

Faculty: [AD] School of Art and Design

Department: [AP] Performing Arts

Module

Code:

EFAAF

Number:

Supervisor: Sarah Whatley

Project title: **Researching Dance:
Modes of Analysis,
Inscription and
Documentation**

Date(s): 01/10/2012

Created: 08/08/2013 07:53

Project Information:

This project is a PhD thesis. The research is primarily book-based, but I may wish to include observations from my experiences in workshop or studio settings. In this case any other individuals referred to will remain anonymous. I may also wish to conduct informal interviews with other scholars or practitioners. In these cases I will provide a consent form, and only include information as agreed with the individual concerned.

Participants in your research

1	Will the project involve human participants?	Yes
---	--	-----

Further information:

I will potentially conduct informal

Informed Consent of the Participant

1	Are any of the participants under the age of 18?	No
---	--	----

2	Are any of the participants unable mentally or physically to give	No
---	---	----

interviews with dance practitioners and/or academics.		consent?	
Supervisor comments: Nothing provided		3 Do you intend to observe the activities of individuals or groups without their knowledge and/or informed consent from each participant (or from his or her parent or guardian)?	
Risk to Participants		Participant Confidentiality and Data Protection	
1	Will the project involve human patients/clients, health professionals, and/or patient (client) data and/or health professional data?	No	
2	Will any invasive physical procedure, including collecting tissue or other samples, be used in the research?	No	1 Will the project involve collecting data and information from human participants who will be identifiable in the final report?
3	Is there a risk of physical discomfort to those taking part?	No	2 Will information not already in the public domain about specific individuals or institutions be identifiable through data published or otherwise made available?
4	Is there a risk of psychological or emotional distress to those taking part?	No	3 Do you intend to record, photograph or film individuals or groups without their knowledge or informed consent?
5	Is there a risk of challenging the deeply held beliefs of those taking part?	No	4 Do you intend to use the confidential information, knowledge or trade secrets gathered for any purpose other than this research project?
6	Is there a risk that previous, current or proposed criminal or illegal acts will be revealed by those taking part?	No	
7	Will the project involve giving any form of professional, medical or legal advice, either directly or indirectly to those taking part?	No	Further information: I may include quotations from unpublished material, if agreed by the participant. I will only identify participants who have agreed to be named in the thesis.
Risk to Researcher		Gatekeeper Protection	
1	Will this project put you or others at risk of physical harm, injury or death?	No	1 Will this project involve collecting data outside University buildings?
2	Will project put you or others at risk of abduction, physical, mental or sexual abuse?	No	2 Do you intend to collect data in shopping centres or other public places?
3	Will this project involve participating in acts that may	No	

	cause psychological or emotional distress to you or to others?		3 Do you intend to gather data within nurseries, schools or colleges?	No						
4	Will this project involve observing acts which may cause psychological or emotional distress to you or to others?	No	4 Do you intend to gather data within National Health Service premises?	No						
5	Will this project involve reading about, listening to or viewing materials that may cause psychological or emotional distress to you or to others?	No	<div>Other Ethical Issues</div> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Is there any other risk or issue not covered above that may pose a risk to you or any of the participants?</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Will any activity associated with this project put you or the participants at an ethical, moral or legal risk?</td> <td>No</td> </tr> </table>		1	Is there any other risk or issue not covered above that may pose a risk to you or any of the participants?	No	2	Will any activity associated with this project put you or the participants at an ethical, moral or legal risk?	No
1	Is there any other risk or issue not covered above that may pose a risk to you or any of the participants?	No								
2	Will any activity associated with this project put you or the participants at an ethical, moral or legal risk?	No								
6	Will this project involve you disclosing personal data to the participants other than your name and the University as your contact and e-mail address?	No								
7	Will this project involve you in unsupervised private discussion with people who are not already known to you?	No								
8	Will this project potentially place you in the situation where you may receive unwelcome media attention?	No								
9	Could the topic or results of this project be seen as illegal or attract the attention of the security services or other agencies?	No								
10	Could the topic or results of this project be viewed as controversial by anyone?	No								
11	Does the project involve the researcher travelling outside the UK?	Yes								
<p>You maybe required to complete a Health & Safety Assessment. You can download the form here or visit the Health & Safety Support Section for more information.</p> <p>Further information: I may include observations or information</p>										

My Pr -

09/09/2013 16:51

from workshops and/or conferences taking place outside of the UK.

Principal Investigator's Declaration

I believe that this project does not require research ethics approval . I have completed the checklist and kept a copy for my own records. I realise I may be asked to provide a copy of this checklist at any time.	Yes
I confirm that I have answered all relevant questions in this checklist honestly.	Yes
I confirm that I will carry out the project in the ways described in this checklist. I will immediately suspend research and request a new ethical approval if the project subsequently changes the information I have given in this checklist.	Yes

Attachments

Participant Information Leaflet.	-
Informed Consent Form.	-
Health & Safety Assessment attached.	-

[\[Close\]](#)

My ETHICS My Projects Support

Coventry University, Priory Street, Coventry, West Midlands, CV1 5FB, United Kingdom.

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Technical Support

Email Only

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